



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

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 21 January 2020 at 2.00 pm**

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

Contact: **Gemma Duckworth (0116 3052583)**

Email: **gemma.duckworth@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC (Chairman)

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mrs. C. Lewis Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. R. Page CC Mrs. A. Wright CC

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

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019.	(Pages 5 - 14)
2. Question Time.	
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	
6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule	



16.

7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

8. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2023/24. Director of Children and Family Services and Director of Corporate Resources (Pages 15 - 38)

9. Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 39 - 64)

10. Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 65 - 72)

11. Care Leaver Offer. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 73 - 80)

12. Children's Innovation Partnership. Director of Children and Family Services

A Powerpoint Presentation will be given for this item.

13. Pupils Missing Out on Education in Leicestershire. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 81 - 90)

14. Virtual School. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 91 - 100)

15. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 3 March 2020 at 2.00pm.

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

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The ability to ask good, pertinent questions lies at the heart of successful and effective scrutiny. To support members with this, a range of resources, including guides to questioning, are available via the Centre for Public Scrutiny website www.cfps.org.uk.

The following questions have been agreed by Scrutiny members as a good starting point for developing questions:-

- Who was consulted and what were they consulted on? What is the process for and quality of the consultation?
- How have the voices of local people and frontline staff been heard?
- What does success look like?
- What is the history of the service and what will be different this time?
- What happens once the money is spent?
- If the service model is changing, has the previous service model been evaluated?
- What evaluation arrangements are in place – will there be an annual review?

This page is intentionally left blank



Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 5 November 2019.

PRESENT

Mrs B. Seaton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC
 Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
 Mrs. C. Lewis
 Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
 Mrs. R. Page CC

Mr T. Parton CC
 Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
 Mr. G. Welsh CC
 Mrs. A. Wright CC

In Attendance.

Mr. I. D. Ould OBE CC – Lead Member for Children and Families
 Mrs. D. Taylor CC – Cabinet Support Member.

32. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2019 were taken as read, confirmed and signed, subject to the following amendment:

Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers (Minute 27 refers) – The final paragraph should be amended to read "...He also commented on the success of the *social work conference* in Melton".

33. Question Time.

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

34. 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).

35. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

36. 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.

No declarations were made.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

38. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

39. Adverse Childhood Experiences.

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Children and Family Services on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This explained what ACEs were, what caused them and the consequences for people who experienced four or more ACEs during childhood.

The Director advised that the County Council was undertaking a range of work to help prevent ACEs in future generations, including a renewed focus on the first 1001 critical days of a child's life to help baby brain development.

Members noted that the Children and Family Wellbeing Service had developed evidence based approaches to parenting to help reduce parental conflict, and the Children and Families Partnership had recently held a multi-agency workshop event to develop the work being undertaken around ACEs.

The Committee was shown a short video which was one person's story of how ACEs had affected their life. The Director undertook to share the link to this video with members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

40. Progress Report: Ofsted Recommendations as Part of the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan 2017-2020 - The Road to Excellence.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which highlighted the progress made against the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan (OCIAP) in responding to the Single Inspection of Children's Social Care in November 2016. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Prior to consideration of the report, the Director provided an update on the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection which had taken place in September and October 2019. Members noted that the inspection had looked at four areas:

- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families (rated good)
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection (rated as requires improvement)
- The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers (rated good)
- Overall effectiveness (rated as requires improvement)

The following points were highlighted:

- i) Ofsted had been clear that progress had been made since its last inspection in 2016. It acknowledged that significant improvements had been made across all areas and identified positive impacts for children in some service areas. However, whilst services for children in care and overall leadership were good, they were not experiencing consistently good practice enough across all services. Also, the extent of the changes still needed meant that their overall judgement had been one of 'requires improvement'.
- ii) A number of strengths had been identified, including a clear commitment from elected members and effective work by staff and senior managers which had led to improved responses to the needs of children and families in many areas. Ofsted found that most children in care were settled and were making good progress and the majority of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation and participating in education, employment or training. The inspection also identified that there was now a more timely response to children when they first became involved with the service, that the quality of assessments had improved, and praise was given to the fostering and adoption services. As a result, Ofsted had confirmed that children in Leicestershire were experiencing better outcomes.
- iii) Key issues identified included that the quality of social work practice was too variable and core areas needed to be improved. There also needed to be improvements around management oversight and it was recommended that the service be more explicit regarding specific timescales in plans. Ofsted identified a lack of consistency in relation to permanence planning for those children who were not going down the route of being adopted and said there needed to be more high quality supervision for social workers.
- iv) Six recommendations had been set out in the report and the Department would need to submit an action plan to Ofsted by 10 February 2020. A full report, along with the action plan, would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.
- v) In response to a query regarding Ofsted's comments around a lack of consistent and sustained improvements in front line practice, the Director advised that the Department had made significant improvements but was currently in the third year of its four year improvement action plan which had been introduced after its last inspection in 2016. Ofsted had acknowledged this, the work undertaken and that which was still in progress, and specifically the range of actions around quality supervision. However, the impact of changes made could not be seen sufficiently enough at this time. This had been an issue made clear throughout the inspection and was recognised by the Department. Assurance had been given by Ofsted that the Department was in a much better position than in 2016 as a result of the actions taken so far. These changes had taken significant effort and the Department was clear about what it needed to do next.
- vi) The Director stated that nothing raised by Ofsted had been unexpected and it was felt that the report provided a balanced view of the where the Department was at the current time, taking account of the fact that progress was still being made. The Lead Member for Children and Families concurred that the comments made by Ofsted were fair and he praised the work undertaken by officers.

In terms of progress with the current OCIAP, an update was provided on the two amber rated actions - management oversight of practice and consistency in social work assessments. The key activities being undertaken around these recommendations were summarised, along with planned work to take place.

Members noted that this included work to help embed the refreshed supervision policy and to look at the quality of supervision to reflect robust management oversight and that cases and plans for children were driven. These had been identified by Ofsted as the key issues to work on. Further case file audits had been completed and the completion rates for assessments within 45 days had continued to improve. The case file audits had identified that the quality of assessments were improving. Work needed to continue on the issues surrounding assessments and to ensure that actions had clear timescales. A campaign was due to commence around planning and supervision.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) In response to a query as to whether the two amber actions referred to above should have been rated as red, the Director stated that the OCIAP was a four year plan and it had been necessary to make some fundamental changes to address the outstanding actions. A clear timescale had been set to make the changes for the longer term and as such the Department had given itself longer to complete the two outstanding actions. In relation to management oversight, Ofsted had not said in its recent inspection that this was not evident, but that it was inconsistent. It was therefore felt that the amber rating was correct.
- ii) The Road to Excellence Plan highlighted the four key aims of the OCIAP. It had been agreed that the Plan wouldn't simply reflect the Ofsted recommendations but would show how the Department would embed real change. The four key aims were areas under which lots of activity was already being undertaken as part of the OCIAP. These were fundamental areas that needed to be achieved in order to ensure that children and young people in Leicestershire got a consistently good service, particularly around supervision and planning. Significant progress had been made but outstanding work now needed to be embedded.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That a further report and action plan be presented to the meeting of the Committee on 21 January 2020.

41. Overview of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Improvements.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided a summary of the national and local context relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) along with an overview of the plans to continuously develop and improve services to support children and families who were experiencing SEND. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) The increase in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) appeared to be continuing. Work had been undertaken to look at the reasons for this and a number of factors had been identified. One was where a child's needs had potentially not been met within a school setting and had escalated. Consideration was being given to building the SEND offer within schools to ensure that children were having their needs met in a mainstream setting where appropriate, albeit with additional support. In response to a query, the Director said it was difficult to say generically whether an EHCP better met the health and care needs of children as this was dependent on a number of factors. However, lots of work was taking place to improve cross working with social care and there was now a greater contribution for health partners so where a good EHCP was in place, it would meet the needs of the child.
- ii) A Parliamentary Review of SEND reforms was currently being undertaken. Given the increase in the number of EHCPs over the last five years, and the resulting pressures on the system, this review was welcomed.
- iii) Concern was raised by a member that individual children were falling through the cracks and were not receiving an EHCP in a timely manner. Assurance was sought that the improvements detailed in the report would prevent this from happening. The Director outlined work being undertaken to ensure this did not happen, such as the Department's more proactive response to children who were out of education to ensure their needs were still being met. Whilst it was acknowledged that there were families in Leicestershire who were struggling, the Department's ambition was to move services around to ensure that it could best respond to individual children's needs who were out of education.
- iv) In response to a query, the Director confirmed that parents/carers, children and young people should always be involved in the development of an EHCP and the annual reviews of EHCPs. There were also other things that the Parent Carer Forum were now involved in, such as the co-production of the Leicestershire SEND newsletter, although there was recognition that this could be improved.
- v) Members noted it was the intention that the development of the Oakfield site would allay any uncertainty around the delivery of the 50 place SEMH school. This would hopefully be in place by September 2020.
- vi) Consultation had taken place with schools on the Council's proposal to transfer funding between the School's Block and High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. A meeting was due to take place with the School's Forum on 6 November to seek approval for this, but early indications were that schools were not supportive of the transfer. If the School's Forum did not approve the proposal, agreement from the Secretary of State would need to be sought.
- vii) It was highlighted that the cumulative deficit on the High Needs Block was forecast to peak at around £13.5m in 2021/22 before it recovered through the work being delivered in the High Needs Development Plan. If the County Council took no action, the trajectory of spend on the high needs block would be unsustainable.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

42. Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services presenting the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy for comment as part of the consultation process. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) The Committee welcomed the draft Strategy.
- ii) Clarification was sought as to the understanding of elected members around their responsibility as a corporate parent. Members noted this was both an individual and collective responsibility and the role and expectations of Councillors had been detailed in the Strategy through seven key principles. It was hoped that elected members would think about opportunities for children individually but then scrutinise these collectively to challenge the delivery. It was agreed that it would be important that all elected members bought in to the Strategy and the Department would work with them to develop their role as corporate parents. It was suggested that the Children in Care Panel, which included members from this Committee, would be a good forum for holding members to account and to consider the development of a framework for members to follow.
- iii) A query was raised around the ongoing support for care leavers and how effective this was. In response, it was stated that this was part of the work being undertaken around the core offer for care leavers. Consideration was currently being given to the financial support and package provided to those young people up to the age of 25. This included the support that was currently given to those who chose to go to university or higher education and the support the Department would want to offer. Currently, support was provided for accommodation for young people coming home from university, and consideration had been given to the provision of 52 weeks free accommodation for care leavers by some universities. Work had previously taken place with the DfE around this offer, and a further meeting was due to be held with the advisor to discuss progress.
- iv) During the consultation period, work was taking place with children and young people to ensure their voice would be reflected in the Strategy. It was the intention to produce a child friendly version of the Strategy for all children and young people in the care of the local authority or care leavers.
- v) Earlier in the year, a Scrutiny Review Panel had considered the role of elected members as corporate parents, and one of the recommendations arising from this had been the introduction of three member champions in the specific areas of education, training and work, housing and accommodation, and health. The three members had now been identified and the terms of reference for the roles agreed. A meeting would shortly be arranged to discuss the role further.
- vi) The Lead Member for Children and Families agreed that the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Panel had ensured that positive progress had

been made and had brought the role of elected members as corporate parents to the fore as there had traditionally been a lack of awareness regarding their responsibility towards children in care. Mr Ould felt that it was essential that the voice of young people was listened to and this was being achieved through various forums, such as the Corporate Parenting Board being co-chaired by a young person, young people presenting items at the Children and Families Partnership, and the Children in Care Councils, which were ran by young people.

- vii) Members noted that the success of the Scrutiny Review Panel had been reinforced through the agreement reached with district/borough councils to remove the paying of council tax for care leavers up to the age of 25.

The outcome of the consultation and the final draft Strategy was due to be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

43. Leicestershire Fostering Agency Statutory Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services providing an overview of the activity of the Leicestershire County Council Fostering Agency for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) Lots of work had been undertaken to recruit and retain foster carers, and the Recruitment and Retention strategies had had an impact. To date this year, the service had lost only three foster carers against a projection of 20. In October, a specialist foster carer recruitment campaign had been launched and four initial visits were being progressed. The success of the Independent Visitor scheme was highlighted, and there were now 38 on roll. The target was to increase this number to 70 over the next two years. This was ambitious, but a retention package was being offered which included bespoke training, the support of an Independent Visitor Co-ordinator and also peer support.
- ii) Details were provided of the introduction of a foster carer's portal, where important information could be shared, and the virtual memory box for children in foster care – this allowed them to store information and memories virtually to access at any time. Both of these initiatives had been well received and highlighted the work of the Fostering Agency to promote the 'we are family' approach.
- iii) The service currently had three specialist one-to-one carers and two pathway carers, who were able to foster more than one child at a time. These were meant to be time limited carers, but the Committee was informed of a child who had stepped down from residential care and was currently going through a Special Guardianship Order to live permanently with their pathway carer. Although this meant that there would be a reduction in the number of pathway

carers, this was seen as a successful outcome for the child and three further pathway carers were currently being assessed.

- iv) There had been a reduction in the number of children placed in residential care. However, it was sometimes necessary for children to be placed in these settings due to them having complex behaviours and high needs, which could only be met by residential care.
- v) A member commented on a recent national news story whereby children had been placed in unsuitable accommodation such as holiday caravans. It was reported that Leicestershire did occasionally place children in such provision but these were monitored very closely and were time limited. An example was given of where this had occurred. Where this was the case, it was classed as an unregulated placement.
- vi) Currently within Leicestershire, there were 133 foster carer households which provided 191 placements. There were 70 connected carers for 120 children. In addition, there were 180 children placed in external fostering agency placements – the majority of these were within Leicestershire but the County Council had commissioned the places from the Independent Fostering Agency market.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

44. Leicestershire Adoption Agency Statutory Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an overview of the activity of the Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Agency for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were raised:

- i) Last year, 34 households were approved as adopters, but over 60 were in assessment currently. It was hoped that the majority of these would be approved by March 2020. The service was being ambitious around placing older children and those with physical disabilities and although this had so far been successful, it was acknowledged that there was a higher risk of disruption, which placed greater work on the team to provide the most vulnerable adopter families with the support they required.
- ii) Details were provided of the birth record counselling service, operated by the Adoption Team. This service also provided reunification where requested. Unlike many other local authorities, Leicestershire did not have a waiting list for this service.
- iii) A Permanence Team pilot had been undertaken – this team carried out a lot of the work traditionally undertaken by Child Protection Teams around profiling the child to find a match. The success of this had not been anticipated in terms of the take up from birth families for support. Out of the 7 children worked with during the pilot, 6 birth families had accepted support from the adoption team

and work continued with these families. As a result of feedback, peer to peer support was now also available.

The Lead Member for Children and Families praised the success of the Adoption Agency, in particular the joint work that was now taking place with Leicester City and Lincolnshire County Councils to match children to the most appropriate families from across the region. As a result of this change in practice, 12 children had been placed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45. Annual Complaints and Compliments Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided a summary of the Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report for 2018/19. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of complaints during 2018/19. However, during the first half of 2019/20, there had been 47 complaints and it was therefore anticipated that the number would reduce this year. Despite the increase in complaints, fewer had escalated beyond Stage 1. A theme for complaints had been delay – this was primarily driven by capacity issues. One locality had been more affected by this than others and an action plan had been put in place to address this. The results from this were beginning to be seen.

A comment was made that poor recording appeared to be a common feature across a number of the reports that the Committee had considered at this meeting. Assurance was given that work was taking place around ensuring that the recording systems supported practice more effectively.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

46. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 21 January 2020 at 2.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JANUARY 2020

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21–2023/24

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a) Provide information on the proposed 2020/21 to 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it relates to the Children and Family Services Department;
 - b) Ask members of the Committee to consider any issues as part of the consultation process, and make any recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission and the Cabinet accordingly.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council agreed the current MTFS in February 2019. This has been the subject of a comprehensive review and revision in light of the current economic circumstances. The draft MTFS for 2020/21–2023/24 was considered by the Cabinet on 17 December 2019.

Background

3. The MTFS is set out in the report to Cabinet on 17 December 2019, a copy of which has been circulated to all members of the County Council. This report highlights the implications for the Children and Family Services Department.
4. Reports such as this one are being presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The views of this Committee will be reported to the Scrutiny Commission on 27 January 2020. The Cabinet will consider the results of the scrutiny process on 7 February 2020 before recommending a MTFS, including a budget and capital programme for 2020/21 to the County Council on the 19 February 2020.

Service Transformation

5. The transformation programme continues to be targeted at the development and implementation of a sustainable, cost effective operating model for the Children and Family Services Department that improves outcomes for children and young people in Leicestershire.

6. The department has significant transformation projects charged with delivering the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings in relation to the development of the Care Placement Strategy, children's centres and early help services and services for pupils with High Needs.

Proposed Revenue Budget

7. The table below summarises the proposed 2020/21 revenue budget and provisional budgets for the next three years. The proposed 2020/21 revenue budget is shown in detail in Appendix A.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Original prior year budget	73,918	80,914	84,444	88,094
Budget Transfers and Adjustments	1,126			
Sub total	75,044	80,914	84,444	88,094
Add proposed growth (Appendix B)	7,795	4,200	4,350	4,550
Less proposed savings (Appendix B)	-1,925	-670	-700	-700
Proposed/Provisional net budget	80,914	84,444	88,094	91,944

8. Detailed service budgets have been compiled on the basis of no pay or price inflation, a central contingency will be held which will be allocated to services as necessary.
9. The central contingency also includes provision for an annual 1% increase in the employers' contribution to the Local Government Pension in line with the requirements of the actuarial assessment.
10. The total gross proposed budget for 2020/21 is £330.9m with contributions from specific grants, health transfers and service user and partner contributions projected of £250m (including £110m, excluding schools, of services funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The proposed net budget for 2020/21 totals £90.9m and is distributed as follows:

Net Budget 2019/20	£ million
Directorate	1,148
Safeguarding, Improvement and Quality Assurance	2,149
Children in Care	41,018
Field Social Work	12,979
Practice Excellence	329
Children and Families Wellbeing Service	8,805
Education Sufficiency	204
Education Quality and Inclusion	1,477
SEND and Children with Disabilities	6,507
Business Support and Commissioning	6,298
Department Total	80,914

Other Changes and Transfers

11. A number of budget transfers (totalling a net increase of £1.1m) were made throughout the 2019/20 financial year and are now adjusted for in the updated original budget. These transfers mainly relate to inflation and pay awards.
12. Growth and savings have been categorised in the appendices under the following classification:
 - * item unchanged from previous MTFS;
 - ** item included in the previous MTFS, but amendments have been made;
 - No stars new item.

This star rating is included in the descriptions set out for growth and savings below.

Savings have also been classified as Transformation or Departmental and highlighted as “Eff” or “SR” dependent on whether the saving is seen as an efficiency or a service reduction or a mixture of both. “Inc” denotes those savings that are funding related or to generate more income.

Growth

13. Growth over the next four years in the local authority budget totals £20.895m, including £7.795m in 2020/21. The budget increases are outlined below and summarised in Appendix B. Before the MTFS report to Cabinet on 7 February 2020, the provisional MTFS will be reviewed and if appropriate updated by the latest budget monitoring position for 2019/20. The social care placement budget, and that for placements for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is subject to volatility.
14. The following paragraphs provide the detail for each growth item;

**** G1 - Social Care Placements £4.25m 2020/21 rising to £13.6m in 2023/24**

Leicestershire's Looked After Children (LAC) number at 31/3/2019 was 585, the current forecast anticipated an increase of 11%. Current projections indicate a LAC increase of 12%. In addition, some children have entered the system with significant and complex needs which have resulted in costs of almost 100% increase in comparison to the average cost of that placement type. Furthermore, whilst the net increase of placement provision has been relatively stable, the increase in the average weekly cost of provision is increasing, projected by the end of the 2019/20 financial year, the average weekly cost to social care of external residential placements will have risen by over £300 p/w and 16+ supported accommodation placements to increase by £117 p/w. A combination of placements with increased complex needs and also market factors are together contributing to the projected increased average weekly cost of placements to children's social care.

***G2 - Removal of time-limited growth – Supporting Leicestershire Families -£1m 2020/21**

The 2018/19 MTFS made provision for a one off £2m in growth (£1m in both 2018/19 and 2019/20) to maintain the current service levels until September 2020 and confirmation was received of the Government's future funding intentions for the national Troubled Families Programme. The Government has now confirmed the grant for 2020/21 which means that the service can operate in its current model to the end of

March 2021. A further review of resources will be undertaken once the government's intention on future funding post 2020/21 for the national programme is known.

*G3 - Special Educational Needs Assessment Service - £0.135m 2020/21

Growth was provided in 2019/20 to enable the service to meet the local authority's statutory duty to assess children and young people for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), this relates to the full year impact of that growth. Caseloads and performance will continue to be monitored to understand the impact of changes in volumes. A review of processes and ways of working within the service is being undertaken and supported by the Transformation Unit.

G4 - Social Care Staff – Increased Caseloads £2.4m 2020/21 rising to £5.34m 2023/34

Investment in additional social worker capacity is required to ensure appropriate caseloads. The department has remained reliant upon agency social workers during 2019/20 and continues to report an overspend in this area. This growth is requested to allow the department to respond to continued demand increase and provide capacity in the workforce to reduce the reliance on agency staff. The recruitment and retention strategy adopted during 2018/19 is attracting staff who are choosing to work and remain in Leicestershire despite higher salaries in neighbouring local authorities. A project is being scoped that will analyse ways of working with the aim of setting out a new operating model. Consideration is being given to the methodology of that review and the role of Barnardo's as the department's strategic partner. It is hoped that this review will identify alternative ways of working to improve efficiency and reduce the level of future growth.

G5 - Social Care Staff Market Premia £0.6m 2020/21 rising to £0.66m in 2023/24

There are significant difficulties both nationally and locally in recruiting social workers, as a result the market place is extremely competitive and there are significant differences in pay structure and grades across the East Midlands. Growth of £500k was approved in the 2018/19 MTFs for the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy and also the establishment of market premia for certain posts. The use of this funding has been reviewed and is largely supporting the recruitment and retention element of the strategy such as advertising, working alongside partner organisations and developing the Leicestershire offer to social workers. Further growth is now required to maintain payment of the market premia to an expanded workforce. It will be necessary to ensure that the employment market is monitored, the Leicestershire approach may need to be amended in the future to ensure Leicestershire is seen as the employer of choice.

G6 – Educational Psychology Service £0.3m 2020/21

SEND reforms implemented in 2014 have resulted in a significant increase in the number of children being assessed for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). A local authority has a duty to seek the advice of an Educational Psychologist about the needs of a child or young person if it is considering making an Education, Health & Care Plan. Since 2017 the number of requests for assessment have increased from 669 to an estimated 1,029 (54%) and requests for advice increased from 329 to 782 (117%). To fulfil this duty and to continue operating a traded support model for schools requires an additional four main grade psychologists. An increase in staff is required to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its duty to complete the EHC needs assessment process within mandated timeframes and its ability to defend decisions at tribunal will not be compromised.

G7 – Loss of SEND Reform Grant £0.31m 2020/21

A revenue grant was introduced to support the implementation of SEND reform and particularly the conversion of the previous Statements of Special Education Needs, to EHCP's. The Department for Education (DfE) have confirmed that this grant has been withdrawn from 2019/20 onwards. In awarding the grant the DfE viewed that the changes resulting from the reform would be one off and once the new system was fully embedded in practice that there would be no additional costs for local authorities. However, under the reform the EHCP assessments require more resource and maintaining the local offer is a recurrent and significant new requirement.

G8 – Pupil Referral Unit Transport £0.05m 2020/21

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide home to school transport and a budget remains within the department for home to school transport for the Oakfield Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at Blaby. The PRU provides educational support for primary pupils excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from Primary schools, as a result pupils travel from across Leicestershire to attend Oakfield and travel costs are difficult to predict as a result but are increasing. In the aim of reducing costs and providing a better educational environment for pupils a new operating model has been established whereby pupils effectively begin their education once under transportation and are supported by Learning Support Assistants. This provides pupils with a more rounded educational experience. At the November Cabinet it was agreed that Oakfield will move from its current location and that new provision be established on two sites. It is envisaged that the revised transport offer and the Oakfield provision on two separate sites will have a positive impact on transport costs in the medium term.

G9 – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children £0.75m 2020/21 rising to £1.5m 2023/24

Demand on this budget continues to increase over recent financial years and is projected to do also in 2019/20 as a result of the volume of children requiring support. This has resulted in increased need for additional staffing to manage demand. Most of these children arrive 'spontaneously' and on arrival are the statutory responsibility of the local authority in which they arrive. The Home Office has increased funding rates for 2019/20 which, based on 18/19 activity, is projected to reduce the budget pressure by £230k. Nevertheless, it is still not sufficient to plug the overall budget pressure. This is an exceptionally volatile budget and it is exceptionally difficult to predict future numbers with any great certainty.

Savings

15. Details of proposed savings for the local authority budget are set out in Appendix B and total £1.9m in 2020/21 and £4m over the next four years in total. Additionally the High Needs Development Plan aims to ensure sustainable services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), in order to achieve this objective cost reductions of £m are required over the period of the MTFS.
16. The following paragraphs provide the detail of each savings item;

* CF1 Eff - New Departmental Operating Model - £0.1m 2020/21

This target is unchanged from the 2018/19 MTFS. During 2018/19 a revised operating structure has been established and embedded for Heads of Service and for all business

support across the department. The review of business support has identified further cost saving options for delivery in 2020/21 through the establishment of common service

** CF2 Eff – Reduction in Social Care Placement Costs -£1.5m 2020/21 rising to -£3.6m 2023/24

This is a merger of the previous CF2, CF3 and CF4 which placed savings targets on the recruitment of additional mainstream and specialist foster carer placements and savings targets on the wrap around support service MISTLE. The Department entered into its strategic partnership arrangements with Barnardo's in 2018 and has subsequently developed a number of work packages. The Children's Innovation Partnership Board has agreed in principle, subject to a positive business case, to a new operating model including developing a Hub that will deliver a peripatetic support service to make assessments and resources needed to ensure children have the right placement at the right time. This will include the development of assessment places attached to the Hub. It also proposes the development of three properties to provide flexible, needs-led provision.

Other activities continue to be undertaken to reduce unit costs, including the continued recruitment of foster carers, the development of a new local framework for providers and the Dedicated Support Team working intensively with in high cost placements or placements at risk of breakdown resulting children stepping down into lower cost placements. This budget is volatile and changes in demand and placement mix can have a significant impact on overall costs.

*CF3 Eff/SR – Early Help Review -£0.25m 2020/21

The Early Help review resulted in the establishment of the Family Wellbeing Service which became operational in April 2019. This merged several functions including the re-designation of children's centres. This is the realisation of the full year impact of savings and relates to staff notice periods and property costs that could not be realised until 2010/21 and fully achieves the overall savings requirement of £1.5m.

* CF4 Eff – Review of Staff Absence -£0.075m 2021/22

Staff absence targets have been allocated to all departments based on the intention to meet or exceed the County Council's target of 7.5 days per FTE. Significant progress is being made across the department through the robust application of the Absence Management Policy, the use of absence Star Chamber meetings and monthly absence reporting to DMT. A figure of 10.75 per FTE was recorded in November 2018, this has reduced to 9.69 days per FTE in September 2019. The target for 2020/21 is, based on the current trajectory, achievable.

*CF5 Inc Academy Conversion £30k 2021/22

Charging for academy conversion was introduced in the 2017/18 MTFs and was based on the DfE's expectation that all maintained schools were to be required to convert to academies. This adjustment removes the income target as a result of changes in national policy regarding academy conversion.

Savings Under Development

17. The Department continues to progress work with the support of the Transformation Unit and Barnardo's to rationalise services, achieve value for money and improve services for children, young people and their families. Current activities are aimed at containing

demand and reducing the need for growth. Two initiatives are targeted with delivering savings.

Children's Innovation Partnership – the partnership has delivered a design brief on a new model for residential care which is being worked into a business case to identify the initial revenue and capital resource for implementation and future revenue savings. This will be completed early in the new year.

Service Redesign for SEND Services - the Transformation Unit is supporting the department with a diagnostic review which is considering the process from referral for an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the way SEND services are delivered. This will not contribute to the MTFS savings target of £4m but will contribute to the recovery of the High Needs Deficit.

18. Other measures will need to be identified and developed to meet the remainder of the £4m target.

Dedicated Schools Grant

19. For 2020/21 the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remains calculated in four separate blocks as set out below;

Funding Block	Areas Funded	Basis for Settlement
<p>Schools Block £417.9m consisting of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School formula funding £414.8m • School Growth £3.1m 	<p>Individual budgets for maintained schools and academies.</p> <p>Growth funding for the revenue costs of delivering additional mainstream school places and to meet the local authorities duty to ensure a sufficient number of school places.</p> <p>DSG is notionally allocated to Leicestershire for all maintained schools and academies. A locally agreed funding formula is applied to this to determine school budgets, for maintained schools these are allocated directly by the local authority, for academies the funding is recouped from the settlement by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who then directly fund academies.</p>	<p>2020/21 continues the movement towards a National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools which attributes units of funding to pupil characteristics. The grant settlement is based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the aggregate of pupil led characteristics for each individual school • an allocation for school led factors based on 2018/19 expenditure. <p>These allocations will be fully delegated to schools.</p> <p>The NFF means that all local authorities receive the same amount of funding for a number of pupil related characteristics. Difference in funding levels relate to the incidence of pupil characteristics rather than differing funding levels</p>

		<p>The allocation of funding for to support new school growth will be retained to meet the future costs of new and expanding schools.</p> <p>In respect of school formula funding this represents a cash increase of 6%, for growth this is an increase of 29%</p>
<p>Central School Services Block £3.261m</p>	<p>This funds historic financial commitments related to schools such as premature retirement costs, some budgets related to schools that are centrally retained e.g. admissions, servicing the Schools Forum and school copyright licences. This block now includes funding from the retained duties element of the former Education Services Grant for the responsibilities that local authorities have for all pupils such as school place planning and asset management.</p>	<p>This is distributed through a per pupil allocation basis and is retained by the local authority.</p> <p>The funding allocation for some historic financial commitments is being reduced nationally from 2020/21 as the DfE have an expectation that these financial commitments will naturally expire. However, this element of funding meets the cost of historic premature retirement costs for teaching staff that will remain. This will be a financial pressure for the medium term as this funding is phased out but commitments retained.</p> <p>Overall this is a decrease of 4% over the 2019/20 baseline.</p>
<p>High Needs Block Est £74.8m</p>	<p>Funds special schools and other specialist providers for high needs pupils and students, the pupil referral unit and support services for high needs pupils including high needs students in further education provision.</p> <p>As with the Schools Block</p>	<p>The formula is based upon population of 0 -19 year olds and proxy indicators for additional educational need including deprivation, ill health, disability and low attainment. Also included is an element based on historic spend. The formula also includes a funding floor to</p>

	<p>this includes funding for special academies and post 16 providers which is recouped by the ESFA who then directly fund academies.</p> <p>Confirmation of the 2020/21 grant is not expected until March 2020.</p>	<p>ensure that local authorities do not receive a funding reduction as a result of the introduction of the formula, Leicestershire receives £m through this element.</p> <p>The grant allocation includes the additional funding announced by the DfE in September 2019 and is an increase of % from the 2019/20 baseline</p>
Early Years Est £35.5m	<p>Funds the Free Entitlement to Early Education (FEEE) for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and an element of the early learning and childcare service.</p> <p>The grant is based on the universal hourly base rate plus additional needs measured with reference to free school meals, disability living allowance and english as an additional language.</p> <p>The initial settlement is based on the October 2019 census, the grant will be updated in July 2020 for the January census and again in June 2021 for the January 2021 census. The final grant will not be confirmed until June 2021.</p>	<p>The allocation is based on individual pupil characteristics and converted to a rate per hour of participation.</p> <p>Leicestershire receives the lowest rate of £4.38 per hour for 3 and 4 year olds and the lowest rate of £5.28 per hour for disadvantaged 2 year olds.</p> <p>This position is an increase of funding of £0.08 per hour on each rate, +1.8% for 3 & 4 year old funding and +1.5% for 2 year old funding from the 2019/20 baseline</p>
£531.461m	2020/21 Estimated DSG	

20. The 2020/21 MTFS sets the overall Schools Budget as a net nil budget at local authority level. However, in 2020/21 there is an annual funding gap of £10.531m which will be an overspend against the grant. For deficits that exceed 1% of DSG local authorities are required to submit a recovery plan to the DfE, it is expected that a submission will be required for each year of the MTFS.

Schools Block

21. 2020/21 sees a further movement towards the National Funding Formula (NFF), this funds all pupils at the same rate irrespective of the authority in which they are educated.

The NFF uses pupil characteristics each with a nationally set funding rate to generate school level funding to local authorities. Within the NFF only the per pupil entitlement is universal to all, other factors reflect the incidence of additional needs such as deprivation and low prior attainment. Funding levels between local authorities and individual schools within those local authorities, vary as a result of pupil characteristics rather than national funding levels.

22. School funding remains a 'soft' school funding formula for 2020/21. A 'soft' formula is where NFF calculates notional school allocations based upon pupil characteristics to generate the grant allocation, local authorities then apply their own local funding formula to generate individual school budgets. The Department for Education (DfE) have confirmed their intention to move to a 'hard' formula as soon as possible where every school budget will be set on the basis of a single, national formula. They have not given any timescale for implementation. The proposed Leicestershire school funding formula continues to reflect the NFF. For 2020/21 it is proposed to add two additional funding factors to reflect sparsity and mobility. The 2020/21 Schools Block provisional DSG settlement is £409.7m, which is based upon the 2018 October school census. This will be updated to the October 2019 school census and reissued in December.
23. Within the Schools Block, but separate to funding for individual schools, local authorities receive funding for the initial revenue costs of commissioning additional primary and secondary school places. This cannot be confirmed until the 2019 October census information is received, the allocation for 2019/20 was £2.3m. The revenue cost of commissioning a new school ranges from £0.5m to £0.8m for a primary and £2.2m to £2.5m for a secondary, depending upon size and opening arrangements. 26 new primary and 3 new secondary schools are expected to be built in Leicestershire in the medium to long term. The revenue requirement for new schools is difficult to assess as it is dependent upon the speed of housing developments, growth in the basic need for additional school places, the school funding formula and the level and the methodology for the DSG growth funding calculation. However, early estimates suggest the cost can be managed within the existing grant. Expenditure is expected to rise annually from 2021/22 and to peak at £5m in 2023/24, annual underspends in growth funding will be set aside in the DSG Earmarked Fund to meet this peak. This position will be closely monitored.

School Funding Formula

24. Nationally schools will receive a minimum per pupil increase in funding of 1.84% per pupil with no capping on increases. Whilst there is no timescale for the implementation of the 'hard' formula for 2020 the minimum per pupil funding levels of £3,750 for primary and £5,000 for secondary have been made mandatory which is a further step toward the DfE's intention. Despite the overall increase in budget, at individual school 70 (32% of primary schools and 1 (2%) of secondary schools remain on the funding floor with an increase of 1.84% per pupil. These schools, despite additional funding, will experience a real terms decrease in income. As the funding guarantee is at pupil level, schools with decreases in pupil numbers will see an overall decrease in budget allocation.
25. The 2018/19 and 2019/20 school funding formula was agreed by Cabinet on 9 January 2018 which largely mirrored the NFF. Consultation was undertaken with schools in October on the introduction of two additional factors;
 - Sparsity - this was originally omitted from the Leicestershire formula as its impact was minimal. 50% of the 102 schools that responded to this element of the

consultation agreed with its inclusion. It is proposed that this is included in the 2020/21 formula.

- Pupil Mobility – this is a new element in the Leicestershire funding allocation for 2020/21. 61% of the 101 schools that responded to this element of the consultation agreed with its inclusion. It is proposed that this is included in the 2020/21 formula.

Schools Forum considered the changes at its meeting of 6 November 2019 and supported their inclusion in the 2020/21 school funding formula.

26. The introduction of these two factors will ensure that the Leicestershire formula fully reflects the NFF. All other factors remain unchanged and fully reflect the DFE funding values for 2020/21. Cabinet will consider the change at its meeting of 7 February.

High Needs

27. The escalating cost of providing SEND services is one of the main financial pressures impacting local government nationally. This is reflected in the draft MTFS, presented to Cabinet in December, where expenditure was forecast to exceed the available grant by £6m in 2020/21, resulting in a cumulative deficit of £13m by 2021/22.
28. Following confirmation of pupil destinations for the 2019/20 academic year demand for packages to support pupils was found to have increased. Additionally, unit costs for placements at special schools and mainstream have increased. Through the High Needs Development Plan an additional 90 places were made available. However, this additional local capacity has simply met the increase in overall demand and not allowed the use of independent provision to reduce. The additional capacity still has a positive cost avoidance impact of £2.2m, as otherwise pupils would have required independent special school placements.
29. The draft MTFS will need to be updated before it is presented to Cabinet for approval, to reflect these changes. For 2020/21 it is estimated that the funding gap will be £11m, assuming that current demand trends continue. The cumulative deficit, incorporating the £3m 2019/20 additional expenditure, is expected to total £19m at the end of 2020/21. A forecast is currently being developed for future years and the financial deficit is expected to continue increasing.
30. The Department are investigating a number of actions that could over the course of the MTFS reduce demand and therefore the overall deficit.
31. Government announced in September 2019 that additional High Needs funding of £700m would be available to local authorities, this equated to £5.5m for Leicestershire. It is anticipated that this funding will continue and the DfE has indicated that the future high-level funding increases that were also announced will include high needs increases.
32. The provisional High Needs DSG is £74.8m. This will be updated in June 2020 for the most recent data. The formula allocates funding across a set of pupil-related indicators and also includes an allocation based on historic spend. For 2020 Leicestershire receives the minimum guaranteed increase of 8% per pupil with the formula retaining £2.3m of protection funding, which is not guaranteed in the long term.
33. The High Needs Development Plan is the Council's approach to planning, commissioning and delivering SEND services focused on three key areas:

- To develop and embed an inclusive approach to practice amongst schools, LA staff and other settings;
 - The modernisation of SEN Services through improved commissioning, processes, decision making and quality assurance;
 - The development of a range of cost effective, high quality local provision.
34. The project is taking a holistic view of the whole SEN system. It is now fully staffed and mobilised.
 35. Leicestershire continues to invest in developing additional specialist provision to reduce costs. The 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) continues that approach and includes a proposed capital programme of £17.8m and recognises that a further £10m may be required for an additional special school in the future. Whilst the DfE provides local authorities with funding to meet basic need increases in mainstream schools, no funding is available to meet the opening costs and diseconomies of scale for expanding specialist provision. The estimated revenue cost of bringing the new provision to capacity is £6.3m. This adds to the High Needs deficit.
 36. The savings built into the High Needs Development Plan are delivered by increasing local capacity to reduce the use of more costly independent provision and reducing overall demand, these are at risk should demand continue to increase.
 37. Local authorities can transfer a maximum of 0.5% of funding from the Schools Block to High Needs following consultation with schools and approval from the Schools Forum. Transfers in excess of 0.5% can be undertaken but require the permission of the Secretary of State, as can approval of the 0.5% should Schools Forum not approve a transfer. A transfer would have yielded c£2m which would reduce the high needs deficit
 38. Consultation was undertaken with schools in October on a transfer from the schools block to high needs. 103 schools responded to the consultation with 84% disagreeing with the proposal. Schools Forum considered the proposal at its meeting on 6 November 2019 and unanimously rejected the proposal. Cabinet on 22 November 2019 resolved not to pursue a transfer for 2020/21 but noted that should the high needs block deficit continue to increase, it may be necessary to consider further measures, including the transfer of funding, in future years.
 39. A DSG deficit has been able to be carried forward to the following year with the approval of the Schools Forum. However, the DfE have recently removed the need for Schools Forum approval to carry forward of a deficit and prohibiting local authorities from contributing to DSG without the approval of the Secretary of State. Whilst the DfE view is that this change would remove concerns raised by auditors it will require local authorities will be required to set aside revenue funding to offset the liability. This will require expenditure reductions in other areas of the local authority.

Central Services Block

40. The central services block funds a number of school related expenditure items such as existing school-based premature retirement costs, copyright licences under a national DfE contract for all schools and other historic costs.
41. The DfE have stated that their expectation is that over a period of time historic costs should 'unwind', as commitments reduce, for example a reduction in pensioners. To

reflect that grant allocations have been reduced for 2020/21, for Leicestershire the reduction is £0.13m. This element of the grant meets costs such as previous commitments for premature retirement costs and school improvement. The reduction can be partially offset against other grant funding in the short term but does create a financial pressure that will increase as further reductions are implemented. The 2020/21 settlement is £3.2m, a decrease of 4.1%.

Early Years Block

42. Nationally early years funding has been increased by £66m. The grant remains determined by the number of children participating in early years education. The funding supports the 30 hours Free Entitlement to Early Education (FEEE) for eligible parents and continued delivery of the early years offer for disadvantaged two year olds. The increase in funding equates to 8p per hour, Leicestershire continues to receive the lowest rate per hour at £5.28 per hour for two year olds and £4.38 per hour for 3 and 4 year olds. The maximum of 5% of the overall settlement is retained to fund the early learning service which fulfils local authority's statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of places for those parents that request one.

Other Funding Sources

43. Grants are largely received from the DfE who to date have not confirmed many of the grant allocations, it is assumed that grants will continue at 2019/20 levels. This lack of certainty results in planning both within the Children and Families Department and within schools difficult. The specific grants for the department are detailed below;
- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (£531.461m est). The purpose of this grant is detailed in other sections of this report.
 - Maintained School sixth forms (£0.445m est). This funding is paid to the local authority by ESFA) for maintained school sixth forms. The allocations are made according to a national formula and paid over to school in full. Academies with sixth forms receive this funding directly from the ESFA.
 - Pupil Premium (£5.366m est). Passported to schools to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. This figure excludes academy allocations with are paid directly by the ESFA. No formal announcement has been made on 2020/21 funding rates and it is assumed that the 2019/20 rates will continue.
 - Universal Infant Free School Meals (£2.847m est). The Children and Families Act 2014 placed a legal duty on all state-funded schools in England to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 from September 2014. This grant is fully passported to schools to fund this responsibility. This figure excludes academy allocations with are paid directly by the ESFA. The grant has not been confirmed and is assumed to be at the same level as 2019/20.
 - PE and Sports Grant (£1.526m est). The grant is passported to schools to deliver additional and sustainable improvements to the provision of PE and sport for the benefit of all pupils to encourage the development of healthy, active lifestyles.

This figure excludes academy allocations which are paid directly by the ESFA. The grant has not been confirmed and is assumed to be at the same level as 2019/20.

- Asylum Seekers (£0.9m est). This supports the cost of supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The grant is variable and dependent upon the number and age of children supported, it is assumed that the grant remains as 2019/20.
- Staying Put Implementation Grant (£0.09m est). The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities to support young people to continue to live with their former foster carers once they turn 18 (the 'Staying Put' duty). This duty came into force on 13 May 2014. The grant has not been confirmed and is assumed to be at the same level as 2019/20.
- Virtual School (£0.09m est). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a new duty on local authorities to provide for the education of certain previously looked after children and supported by the provision of a specific grant. The grant has not been confirmed and is assumed at the same level as 2019/20.
- Personal Advisors to Care Leavers (£0.4m est). The children and Social Work Act extended the duty on local authorities to provide Personal Advisor (PA) support from age 21 to age 25 if they wish to access this support. The new burdens assessment suggested that this grant will increase in 2019/20, however the grant has not been confirmed and has been assumed to be at the same level as 2019/20.

- Youth Justice Good Practice (£0.456m). The purpose of the Youth Justice Good Practice Grant is to develop good practice and commission research, with a view to achieving a reduction in youth re-offending, reduction in the numbers of first time entrants to the justice system and reduction in the use of youth custody. The grant has not been confirmed and is assumed to be at the same level as 2019/20.
- Troubled Families Programme (£1m). Three elements of grant are received from the Government for this national programme, the first for engaging families within the programme, the second is payment for results for meeting the Governments targets and the third to fund service development.
- School Improvement Grant (£0.333m est). This was a new grant from September 2017 for local authorities to co-ordinate school improvement activity in mainstream schools.
- Early Years Disability Access Grant (£0.114m est). Supports access for children with disabilities to attend nursery providers
- Early Years Pupil Premium (£0.146 est). Supports deprived children accessing the free entitlement to early education.
- Teachers Pay Grant (£1.156m est). This grant provides funding towards the 2018 and 2019 teacher pay awards and meets the estimated cost of the increase in excess of 2%. This grant is passported directly to maintained schools with academies receiving funding directly from the ESFA.
- Teachers Pension Grant (£3.486m est). This grant provides funding to both maintained schools and local authorities for the increase in the employer cost of the teachers pension scheme in September 2019.

Capital Programme

44. The draft Children and Family Services capital programme totals £127.7m over the next four years including £31.71m in 2020/21. The draft programme and funding are outlined below and summarised in Appendix C. It is envisaged that over the four years of the MTFS an additional 5,900 mainstream school places and an additional 500 places for children and young people with SEND will be created.
45. The programme is partially funded by external grant and developer S106 contributions:

Basic Need Grant - is received from the DfE based upon the need to create additional school places. Grant of £8.751 for 2020/21 has been confirmed but has been estimated at £8.8m for the final three years of the programme, the timing of announcements of grant for these latter of the MTFS are uncertain although a settlement for 2021/22 is expected in the spring. The grant reflects the overall place need across the County and for both maintained schools and academies. The grant meets the infrastructure costs of creating new places in primary and secondary schools. Eligible revenue costs fall to be met from the local authorities growth fund funded from DSG for primary and secondary schools. No funding is received for the revenue and capital costs of additional places for SEND.

Strategic Maintenance Grant – is received from the DfE for the maintenance of maintained schools only. Grant is based on a formula that considers pupil numbers and overall condition of the school estate. Allocations for the MTFs period are yet to be confirmed. The grant reduces as schools convert to academies.

S106 Contributions – it is estimated that a total of £68.3 of S106 contributions will be received to fund the proposed programme, £8.9m in 2020/21. Estimates for the latter two years of the MTFs are uncertain and are dependent upon the speed of housing developments. It is estimated that the full costs of new schools required on new housing developments will be fully funded from s106 contributions.

SEND Provision Capital Grant – this grant was announced during 2017/18 by the DfE and in response to the introduction of the National Funding formula for High Needs to provide local authorities with capital to develop cost effective SEN provision and is confirmed at £1.2m in 2020/21. There is no indication that this funding will continue past this point.

Free School Bid

The programme includes funding from the DfE for £8m to build a new 50 place special school for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs in Shepshed. The DfE has approved the bid and negotiations are on-going with the on the scope and funding arrangements for the build.

Draft Capital Programme 2020/21 – 2023/24

The draft capital programme is set out in the following table and shown in full in Appendix C;

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
Additional School Places	19,180	24,170	20,600	35,000	98,950
SEND Programme	9,780	0	8,000	0	17,780
Other Capital	2,750	2,800	2,700	2,700	10,950
Total	31,710	26,970	31,300	37,700	127,680

46. The draft programme has been developed on a priority basis and within that schemes are at different stages of development. For some schemes contractors' prices have been obtained but for others costs are indicative and based on exemplar and / or similar schemes. In order to minimise risk where contractors prices have not yet been obtained contingency is held to mitigate against any increase in cost. As prices are confirmed schemes will be re-evaluated and re-prioritised as necessary.
47. The programme is focused on two significant areas; the need to provide additional primary school places based on the assessed need through the annual school capacity assessment which also provides the basis for the Basic Need capital grant. It is estimated that additional places will be delivered in 2020/21, the location and number of the additional places can only be confirmed following the confirmation of school admissions in January and April 2020.

2020/21 Capital Programme

Schemes are focused on the need to develop additional primary school places in Ashby and Shepshed in 2010/21 with further new schemes in Castle Donnington, Thorpebury, West of Loughborough, Coalville, Lutterworth, Melton and Market Harborough over the remainder of the programme. The programme includes S106 developer contributions of £65.8m to deliver these new schools. It also includes contingency to address any unforeseen issues arising from September 2020 admissions data.

The programme also includes a total £9.8m investment in SEND provision to increase local provision through the development and expansion of SEN units and special schools to provide the infrastructure upon which the high needs development plan will be delivered. The programme will provide a total of 500 additional SEND places.

Background Papers

Presentation to Schools Forum 6 November 2019 – 2020/21 School Funding Proposals
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=6138&Ver=4>

Report to Cabinet 22 November 2019 – Special Educational Needs – Proposed Transfer of funding within Dedicated Schools Grant
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5608&Ver=4>

Report to Cabinet 17 December 2019 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6052&Ver=4>

Report to Cabinet 9 January 2018 – 2018/19 and 2019/20 School Funding Formula
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=5176#A153992>

Circulation under local issues alert procedure

None.

Officers to Contact

Jane Moore, Director of Children and Family Services
Tel: 0116 305 7441
E-mail: Jane.Moore@Leics.gov.uk

Chris Tambini, Director of Corporate Resources, Corporate Resources Department
Tel: 0116 305 6199
E-mail: chris.tambini@leics.gov.uk

Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources Department
Tel: 0116 305 6401
E-mail: jenny.lawrence@leics.gov.uk

Nick Wash, Head of Finance, Corporate Resources Department
Tel: (0116) 305 7146
E-mail: Nick.wash@leics.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A – Revenue Budget 2020/21

Appendix B – Growth and Savings

Appendix C – Capital Programme 2020/21 – 2023/24

Equality and Human Rights Implications

48. Public authorities are required by law to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
and
 - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
49. Many aspects of the County Council's MTFS may affect service users who have a protected characteristic under equalities legislation. An assessment of the impact of the proposals on the protected groups must be undertaken at a formative stage prior to any final decisions being made. Such assessments will be undertaken in light of the potential impact of proposals and the timing of any proposed changes. Those assessments will be revised as the proposals are developed to ensure decision makers have information to understand the effect of any service change, policy or practice on people who have a protected characteristic.
50. Proposals in relation to savings arising out of a reduction in posts will be subject to the County Council Organisational Change policy which requires an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken as part of the action plan.

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

Budget 19/20		Employees £	Running Expenses £	Internal Income £	Gross Budget	External Income £	Net Total 20/21 £	Schools	Early Years	High Needs	Dedicated Schools Grant	LA Block
1,364,295	C&FS Directorate	1,258,403	105,892	0	1,364,295	0	1,364,295	18,499	44,230	153,947	216,676	1,147,619
1,760,651	C&FS Safeguarding	1,973,353	235,298	-48,000	2,160,651	-150,000	2,010,651	0	0	0	0	2,010,651
137,937	LSCB	271,028	149,800	-70,100	350,728	-212,791	137,937	0	0	0	0	137,937
1,898,588	Safeguarding, Improvement & QA	2,244,381	385,098	-118,100	2,511,379	-362,791	2,148,588	0	0	0	0	2,148,588
682,054	Asylum Seekers	339,318	1,092,736	0	1,432,054	0	1,432,054	0	0	0	0	1,432,054
3,207,781	C&FS Fostering & Adoption	4,236,105	803,676	-486,000	4,553,781	-666,000	3,887,781	0	0	0	0	3,887,781
29,651,084	C&FS Operational Placements	241,568	32,259,516	0	32,501,084	-100,000	32,401,084	0	0	0	0	32,401,084
1,990,904	Children in Care Service	2,196,454	524,450	0	2,720,904	-40,000	2,680,904	0	0	0	0	2,680,904
616,622	Education of Children in Care	813,992	246,100	-347,500	712,592	-95,970	616,622	0	0	0	0	616,622
36,148,445	Total Children in Care	7,827,437	34,926,478	-833,500	41,920,415	-901,970	41,018,445	0	0	0	0	41,018,445
11,050,622	Fieldwork locality Teams	11,242,668	649,080	-12,126	11,879,622	-29,000	11,850,622	0	0	0	0	11,850,622
1,128,604	Social Care Legal costs	123,204	1,005,400	0	1,128,604	0	1,128,604	0	0	0	0	1,128,604
12,179,226	Field Social Work	11,365,872	1,654,480	-12,126	13,008,226	-29,000	12,979,226	0	0	0	0	12,979,226
329,630	Practice Excellence Team	281,630	48,000	0	329,630	0	329,630	0	0	0	0	329,630
50,555,889	TOTAL CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE	21,719,320	37,014,056	-963,726	57,769,650	-1,293,761	56,475,889	0	0	0	0	56,475,889
10,055,299	Children & Families Wellbeing Service	10,162,693	2,196,639	-742,986	11,616,346	-2,811,047	8,805,299	0	0	0	0	8,805,299
595,851	Education Sufficiency	926,251	42,900	-108,800	860,351	-264,500	595,851	391,502	0	0	391,502	204,349
35,650,199	C&FS 0-5 Learning	2,275,674	34,422,585	0	36,698,259	-500,902	36,197,357	0	34,655,830	1,202,075	35,857,905	339,452
275,081	C&FS 5-19 Learning	382,926	356,817	-70,680	669,063	-418,235	250,828	223,746	0	0	223,746	27,082
3,697,401	Inclusion	599,353	3,092,817	0	3,692,170	-150,000	3,542,170	0	0	2,622,059	2,622,059	920,111
67,674	Governor Development Services	152,900	113,949	-76,175	190,674	-123,000	67,674	0	0	0	0	67,674
1,164,168	Pupil Referral Unit	39,021	1,211,647	-36,500	1,214,168	0	1,214,168	0	0	1,091,647	1,091,647	122,521
40,854,523	Total Education Quality & Inclusion	3,449,874	39,197,815	-183,355	42,464,334	-1,192,137	41,272,197	223,746	34,655,830	4,915,781	39,795,357	1,476,840
66,118,987	C&FS SEN	1,479,270	75,058,029	-313,033	76,224,266	-372,409	75,851,857	0	0	74,774,190	74,774,190	1,077,667
2,437,217	C&FS Specialist Services to Vulnerable Groups	2,204,516	562,403	-35,000	2,731,919	-308,251	2,423,668	0	0	2,423,668	2,423,668	0
792,524	C&FS Psychology Service	1,452,981	45,350	-205,807	1,292,524	-200,000	1,092,524	0	0	0	0	1,092,524
4,336,862	C&FS Disabled Children Service	1,165,110	3,172,552	0	4,337,662	-800	4,336,862	0	0	0	0	4,336,862
1,755,046	C&FS HNB Development Programme	1,139,484	236,300	0	1,375,784	0	1,375,784	0	0	1,375,784	1,375,784	0
-5,674,771	High Needs Deficit	0	0	-10,530,815	-10,530,815	0	-10,530,815	0	0	-10,530,815	-10,530,815	0
69,765,865	Total SEND & Children with Disabilities	7,441,361	79,074,634	-11,084,655	75,431,340	-881,460	74,549,880	0	0	68,042,827	68,042,827	6,507,053
4,331,170	C&FS Admin & Committees	4,926,216	696,060	-872,932	4,749,344	0	4,749,344	8,570	273,791	143,118	425,479	4,323,866
499,200	C&FS Finance	0	509,098	0	509,098	0	509,098	509,098	0	0	509,098	0
1,489,900	C&FS Human Resources	0	1,534,900	0	1,534,900	-45,000	1,489,900	674,900	0	0	674,900	815,000
720,973	C &FS Commissioning & Planning	703,602	62,100	0	765,702	-44,729	720,973	0	0	0	0	720,973
127,614	C&FS Sub Transformation	436,214	1,400	0	437,614	0	437,614	0	0	0	0	437,614
7,168,857	Total Business Support and Commissioning	6,066,032	2,803,558	-872,932	7,996,658	-89,729	7,906,929	1,192,568	273,791	143,118	1,609,477	6,297,453
128,440,395	TOTAL EDUCATION & EARLY HELP	28,046,211	123,315,546	-12,992,728	138,369,029	-5,238,873	133,130,156	1,807,816	34,929,621	73,101,726	109,839,164	23,290,993
392,172,255	Total Individual Schools Budget	0	433,190,679	0	433,190,679	-15,458,413	417,732,266	417,857,001	0	-124,735	417,732,266	0
0	Dedicated Schools Grant Recoupment	0	-302,068,841	0	-302,068,841	302,068,841	0	0	0	0	0	0
2,378,699	Central Charges	0	2,285,220	0	2,285,220	0	2,285,220	1,434,683	210,848	639,689	2,285,220	0
-499,866,659	Dedicated Schools Grant	0	0	0	0	-530,073,326	-530,073,326	-421,117,999	-35,184,700	-73,770,627	-530,073,326	0
-105,315,705	TOTAL DSG ITEMS	0	133,407,058	0	133,407,058	-243,462,898	-110,055,840	-1,826,315	-34,973,852	-73,255,673	-110,055,840	0
75,044,874	TOTAL CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES	51,023,934	293,842,552	-13,956,454	330,910,032	-249,995,532	80,914,500	0	-0	0	-0	80,914,500

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX B

References	<u>GROWTH</u>	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	
* items unchanged from previous Medium Term Financial Strategy						
** items included in the previous Medium Term Financial Strategy which have been amended						
Demand & cost increases						
**	G1	Demographic growth- Social Care Placements	4,250	7,200	10,300	13,600
*	G2	Removal of time-limited growth - Supporting Leicestershire Families - transition to a new model when external funding ceases	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
*	G3	Special Education Needs Assessment Service - increased demand on service	135	135	135	135
	G4	Front-line social care staff - increased caseloads	2,400	3,380	4,360	5,340
	G5	Social Care market premia to support recruitment	600	620	640	660
	G6	Educational Psychology Service - increased demand	300	300	300	300
	G7	Loss of SEN Reform Grant	310	310	310	310
	G8	Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Transport - increased demand	50	50	50	50
	G9	Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers - additional demand	750	1,000	1,250	1,500
		TOTAL	7,795	11,995	16,345	20,895

References	<u>SAVINGS</u>	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
		£000	£000	£000	£000	
* items unchanged from previous Medium Term Financial Strategy						
** items included in the previous Medium Term Financial Strategy which have been amended						
Eff - Efficiency saving						
SR - Service reduction						
Inc - Income						
*	CF1 Eff	New Departmental Operating Model	-100	-100	-100	-100
**	CF2 Eff	Reduction in Social Care Placement costs	-1,500	-2,200	-2,900	-3,600
*	CF3 Eff/SR	Early Help Review	-250	-250	-250	-250
*	CF4 Eff	Review of staff absence	-75	-75	-75	-75
*	CF5 Inc	Academy conversion (reduced numbers)	0	30	30	30
		TOTAL	-1,925	-2,595	-3,295	-3,995

This page is intentionally left blank

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 to 2023/24 - Draft

APPENDIX C

Estimated Completion Date	Gross Cost of Project £000		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Total £000
		<u>MAIN GRANT FUNDING PROGRAMME</u>					
Mar-24	98,950	Provision of Additional School Places	19,180	24,170	20,600	35,000	98,950
		SEND Programme					
Mar-21	1,400	Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Units	1,400				1,400
Mar-21	1,000	SEMH Special School - LA Developed	1,000				1,000
Mar-23	8,000	SEMH Special School - Free School	0	0	8,000		8,000
Mar-21	1,430	Post 16 SEND Provision	1,430				1,430
Mar-21	1,500	Communication and Interaction Difficulty Units	1,500				1,500
Mar-21	4,100	Communication and Interaction Difficulty School	4,100				4,100
Mar-21	350	Expansion of Special Schools	350				350
		Sub-total - SEND Programme	9,780	0	8,000	0	17,780
Mar-24	8,000	Strategic Capital Maintenance	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000
Mar-24	2,000	Schools Devolved Formula Capital	500	500	500	500	2,000
Mar-24	800	Schools Access / Security	200	200	200	200	800
		Other Capital	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	10,800
Mar-22	150	Modular Replacements - Removal and feasibility	50	100			150
		Overall Total	31,710	26,970	31,300	37,700	127,680

<u>Future Developments - subject to further detail and approved business cases</u>							
		New Area Special School					
		Additional School Infrastructure arising from Housing Developments					
		SEN Provision arising from new housing development					
		Residential Strategy - tbc					

This page is intentionally left blank



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2020**

**OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of children's social care services in Leicestershire and to present the Action Plan which has been developed to address the recommendations in the Ofsted Report. The Ofsted findings and the County Council's response are attached to this report as Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Cabinet, in March 2017, noted the outcome of an Ofsted inspection of children's social care services which had taken place at the end of 2016 and agreed an Action Plan which set out the approach to the future development and improvement of services to children and families in Leicestershire.
3. A report was presented to the Cabinet in December 2019 that set out the outcome of the recent inspection and the draft action plan.
4. The Ofsted Inspection was undertaken in accordance with the framework for the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services.

Background

5. Ofsted undertakes the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services on all local authority areas with the statutory responsibility for delivering children's services. The inspection framework inspects local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers and the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice.
6. The last full inspection of the County Council's children's services was undertaken in November 2016 when the services were graded as "requiring improvement to be good" across all areas. Following the 2016 Inspection a

comprehensive action plan was created in order to drive improvements across a number of key areas in the Department including the development of a quality assurance framework, social work development programme, practice and management standards, improved quality of supervision for staff, service improvements and the development of strong policies and procedures.

7. In November 2018 a focused visit was undertaken by Ofsted on the Front Door, which deals with all new requests for services coming into the Department, the conclusion of which was that services had improved from November 2016. (“Focused visits” evaluate an aspect of service, a theme or the experiences of a cohort of children and take place between standard and short inspections).

Leicestershire’s Ofsted Inspection

8. The inspection was carried out over three weeks from 16 September to 4 October 2019, involving 8 inspectors. The inspectors considered the quality of work across Early Help and Children’s Social Care and the impact of services on children and young people in Leicestershire.
9. The inspectors read case files, met with staff and leaders in the Department and considered the Department’s Self Assessment of its performance and improvement journey since the inspection in 2016.

Inspection Findings

10. The findings of the inspection are detailed in a report from Ofsted, attached at Appendix A to the report. This includes gradings indicating how the service is judged to be performing in four broad areas. The grades available to Ofsted are (1) inadequate – which triggers formal intervention by DfE, (2) requires improvement to be good (3) good, and (4) outstanding.
11. To date, in relation to overall effectiveness, around 13% of councils in England have been graded inadequate, 35% require improvement to be good, 36.5% are good and 15.5% are outstanding.
12. Leicestershire has been graded as follows:-

Service Area	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.	Requires Improvement
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers.	Good
Overall effectiveness.	Requires Improvement

Report Headlines

13. Ofsted identified that progress has been made in many areas of children's social care services in Leicestershire since the last inspection in 2016, when all judgements were graded as 'requires improvement to be good'. However, it acknowledged that whilst services for children in care are now judged to be good, those for children needing help and protection still require some further improvement. The report further emphasised that overall, children are not experiencing good practice consistently enough across all services, and that the extent and impact of the remaining areas for improvement are substantial. For these reasons, in terms of overall effectiveness Ofsted concluded that the services still require improvement to be good.

Leicestershire's Strengths

14. Ofsted recognised that the commitment and investment by political and corporate leaders, together with effective work by staff and senior managers, have meant that responses to the needs of children and families have improved in many areas across children's services. For instance -
- Leicestershire provides a good variety of Early Help Services which support parents to safely care for their children.
 - Children receive a timely and effective response when they need help and protection in the evenings and at weekends. Swift action is taken to ensure that children are protected, with those at risk of immediate harm seen early, and initial assessments of their needs are prompt. Moreover, improvements in the first response service mean that checks are now timelier, and thresholds are more clearly understood.
 - Disabled children who need help and protection receive a good service. They are seen regularly, according to their plan, and are supported effectively by social workers who know them well.
 - Inspectors were impressed by the Vulnerability Hub and its effectiveness in safeguarding children and young people who are at risk of harm or who are experiencing harm from sexual exploitation, as well as those who go missing from home and from care. Ofsted highlighted the strong multi-agency collaboration and investment that enables the work to be effective.
 - Inspectors praised the effective systems in place to monitor the welfare of children who are electively home educated, as well as those who are missing from education.
 - Most children in care and care leavers make good progress, are settled in good homes with their needs well met, and their lives are better because of the improved services.

- Social workers have manageable caseloads, enabling them to get to know the children well and work with them. Furthermore, most children enter care only when it is necessary and appropriate to do so.
- The Fostering and Adoption Services were identified by inspectors as very strong, in particular the training and support provided to children in foster care and to foster carers, post-adoption support and the Adoption Panel process.
- Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation, and the majority are participating in education, training or employment. Inspectors noted that the County Council has aspirations for its children in care and care leavers and holds regular events that celebrate their achievements.

Areas for Further Improvement

15. Ofsted identified a number of areas for improvement, in addition to the key actions set out in the report, in particular -
- That the quality of social work practice is still too variable, particularly for children needing help and protection. In addition, core areas of social work practice (in particular planning and recording) and management oversight still need to be improved.
 - Inspectors noted that plans for children in need or at risk did not always state the specific actions that needed to be taken, and most plans lacked timeframes within which actions needed to be completed, and were concerned that this might inhibit timely progress and could lead to drift and delay for children.
 - Inspectors considered that permanence planning was significantly weaker for those children who needed options other than adoption (for instance, foster or residential placements) and that permanence is not being sufficiently driven through management oversight or planning.
 - Supervision of social workers is not of a high enough quality to ensure that social work practice is always effective and meeting the needs of children in a timely way.

Ofsted's Key Recommendations

16. The report contains six recommendations for improvement covering the following areas:-
- i. The timeliness of assessment and help for children who are not identified as being at immediate risk of significant harm but who live with the impact of cumulative risk and harm.
 - ii. The timeliness of work to secure positive change for children during the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline.

- iii. The quality and consistency of social work practice in care planning, including the quality of supervision and oversight to prevent unnecessary drift and delay for children.
 - iv. The quality of case recording to enable new workers to more easily understand a child's history and circumstances.
 - v. Planning for permanence for children whose plan is not adoption.
 - vi. Monitoring of the quality and appropriateness of alternative education provision for children in care.
17. The action plan prepared in response to this is attached as Appendix B. This builds on the continuous improvement plan (The Road to Excellence) that was developed as a four-year plan following the 2016 Ofsted inspection. The latest action plan must be submitted to Ofsted by 10th February 2020.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

18. There are no specific equality or human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The findings apply to all children and young people with whom the County Council is engaged regardless of any protected characteristic. The changes as a result of the Action Plan will help improve the outcomes for children and their families.
19. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate should there be any reviews of Departmental strategies or services.

Appendices

Appendix A - Ofsted Report
Appendix B - Action Plan

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 10 March 2017

Ofsted Report - Leicestershire: Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (2016)

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4859&Ver=4>

Ofsted – framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspection of local authority children's services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

Officer to contact

Jane Moore
Director of Children and Family Services
Tel: 0116 305 2649
email: jane.moore@leics.gov.uk

Leicestershire County Council

Inspection of children's social care services

Inspection dates: 23 September 2019 to 4 October 2019

Lead inspector: Kate Malleson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good

Progress has been made in many areas of children's services in Leicestershire since the last inspection in 2016, when all judgements were graded as 'requires improvement to be good'. While services for children in care are now judged to be good, those for children needing help and protection still require improvement to be good. Overall, children are not experiencing good practice consistently enough across all services, and the extent and impact of the remaining areas for improvement are substantial. For these reasons, overall effectiveness requires improvement to be good.

Commitment and investment by political and corporate leaders, together with effective work by staff and senior managers, have meant that responses to the needs of children and families have improved in many areas. Most children in care are settled in good homes with their needs well met, and, for that reason, they make good progress. Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation, and the majority are participating in education, training or employment. There is a more timely and effective response when children first need help and protection, including out of hours and for children at risk of sexual exploitation and for

children who go missing, as well as those experiencing the impact of domestic abuse. The quality of assessments has improved, and they now more clearly identify children's needs. Therapeutic support for children in foster care or who have been adopted or achieve permanence through special guardianship has been strengthened. For these reasons, more children and families experience better outcomes.

The quality of social work practice is still too variable, particularly for children needing help and protection. Although the pace of improvement has accelerated in the last 12 months, since the appointment of a permanent director of children's services, core areas of social work practice and management still need to be improved. Plans for children in need or at risk do not always state the specific actions that need to be taken, and most plans lack timeframes for actions to be completed within. These omissions inhibit timely progress. Permanence planning is significantly weaker for those children who are needing permanence through options other than adoption. Supervision of social workers is not of a high enough quality to ensure that social work practice is always effective.

What needs to improve

- The timeliness of assessment and help for children who are not identified as being at immediate risk of significant harm but who live with the impact of cumulative risk and harm.
- The timeliness of work to secure positive change for children during the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline.
- The quality and consistency of social work practice in care planning, including the quality of supervision and oversight to prevent unnecessary drift and delay for children.
- The quality of case recording to enable new workers to more easily understand a child's history and circumstances.
- Planning for permanence for children whose plan is not adoption.
- Monitoring of the quality and appropriateness of alternative education provision for children in care.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: requires improvement to be good

1. Children and families can access a good variety of targeted early help services, which support parents to safely care for their children. However, some children wait too long to access this support. Senior managers are aware that the steps which are built into the system at the front door through early help triage and

subsequent allocation to the appropriate early help service are unnecessarily difficult.

2. There has been some improvement in the quality of referrals since the implementation of a newly designed multi-agency referral form in April 2019. Prior to this, the quality of referrals from partner agencies about children who need help and protection was too variable. When there is a lack of information, this causes delay while more information is sought to inform decision-making. The improved form and shared language enable professionals to be specific about concerns and to keep positive factors in mind. It also helps parents to be clearer about their requests. This added clarity facilitates timelier decision-making to meet children's needs.
3. Children receive a timely and effective response when they need help and protection in the evenings and at weekends. Risk is responded to swiftly, and action is taken to ensure that children are protected. This includes holding strategy discussions out of normal office hours. Thorough recording means that it is clear what immediate actions have been taken and what the next steps are to ensure that children's ongoing needs are assessed and responded to appropriately.
4. Children at risk of immediate harm are seen early, and initial assessments of their needs are prompt. Improvements in the first response service mean that checks are now timelier and thresholds are more clearly understood. Consent is routinely sought or dispensed with when appropriate.
5. Management oversight of high-risk duty work is firmly in place. Strategy meetings are usually prompt and result in clear actions and timescales. However, there are sometimes delays when cases are already open, and instead of police attending in person, reports are sent in. This means that there is no shared discussion about the most current presenting risks to children.
6. Child protection enquiries are thorough, and a clear rationale for the decision to begin section 47 enquiries is recorded. Most initial child protection conferences are timely, and children receive help quickly.
7. Work with police, education and health partners is mostly a strength. Information is efficiently shared, contributes to assessments and planning, and influences decisions about how to safeguard children.
8. Although improving, the quality of assessments remains variable. More recent assessments are better at identifying the impact for children of cumulative risk, but for a small minority of children, there is insufficient analysis of the risks that they are exposed to. A lack of effective action and planning for a small number of children living in circumstances of chronic neglect or domestic abuse means that their circumstances do not improve quickly enough. These children have

remained in neglectful or harmful circumstances for longer than they should have.

9. Where children are not at immediate risk of harm, assessments are not undertaken swiftly enough. Sometimes there is a delay in allocating to a worker, children are not seen quickly enough, and recommendations are not routinely signed off as management decisions. Some of these children experience delay in receiving help because of the lack of urgency in progressing actions which would improve their daily lived experiences.
10. The quality of plans is not consistent. Stronger plans are rooted in a thorough assessment and are specific and clear about expectations and timeframes for improvements to be made. Weaker plans lack clear, specific timeframes for action and are not sufficiently clear about what needs to happen and who is responsible for making it happen. While the use of the social work methodology helpfully clarifies and articulates the concerns and strengths, this enhanced understanding does not consistently translate into effective positive action. Where there are multiple children in a family, the needs of individual children are sometimes lost. For some children, the ineffectiveness of poor-quality plans is further compounded by weak management oversight. This combination causes drift and delay for children, who then wait too long for their circumstances to improve.
11. Children in the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline (PLO) wait too long for social workers and managers to formulate plans and act to achieve positive change for them. Letters written to parents help them to understand what they need to do to prevent court proceedings. Weaker letters include complex social work terminology that prevents parents from having absolute clarity about what the concerns are and when the changes are needed. Management oversight of planning and tracking needs to be more robust so that delay is reduced for all children. An appropriate plan is in place to address this, with some progress evident, but an even sharper focus is needed.
12. Social workers feel well supported by their managers. Management oversight is visible on case records, but the impact that managers have on case progression is too variable and does not prevent children from waiting too long to achieve positive change. This is because supervision is not regular, there is limited evidence of analysis or reflective practice, and it does not lead to specific or challenging actions with timescales for completion that are followed up and children's progress monitored.
13. Although most social workers know their children well, and take care to understand their wishes and feelings, records do not consistently reflect the positive work they do. In some cases, there has been a lack of persistence in developing a relationship with a child or young person and a lack of evidence of trying to build this. The phrases 'hard to engage' or 'does not engage' are then used inappropriately in case records.

14. Children's rights officers support children well to express their views during conferences and reviews, including good engagement by these workers with children in the PLO. Children using this service value the listening ear of advocates, but a minority expressed frustration about their relationships with their social workers, and about the impact their social workers had on their lives.
15. Disabled children who need help and protection receive a good service. They are seen regularly, according to their plan, and are supported effectively by social workers who know them well. Risks and vulnerabilities are well understood, and a variety of help is provided to meet their needs, including the use of short breaks and access to leisure activities and physical aids.
16. Timely pre-birth assessments are undertaken to assess the risks to unborn babies, and these lead to appropriate child protection planning. This includes providing support to parents before and after the birth, which enables parents to care for their baby safely. In a small minority of cases, pre-birth assessments had not progressed quickly enough. This meant that risk could not be mitigated and mothers and babies were separated at birth while work was completed. The local authority has used learning from speaking to these parents about how this creates stress for families at birth and might be preventable with earlier action. As a result, they had already delivered specific workshops to further improve practice to minimise the risk of unnecessary separation at birth.
17. The impressive Vulnerability Hub is effective in safeguarding children and young people who are at risk of harm or who are experiencing harm from sexual exploitation, as well as those who go missing from home and from care. Strong multi-agency collaboration and investment enable teams of specialist social workers, police and other staff to quickly share information, fully consider historical concerns, and to make effective decisions which safeguard and minimise the risks to children and young people. Return interviews are comprehensive, include children's views and are completed in a timely manner, with information used to inform work with individual children and wider disruption activity.
18. Although work to address child sexual exploitation is well established and embedded, the local authority and police partners acknowledge further work is needed to understand the true scale of child criminal exploitation in Leicestershire and to develop an equally effective response. Training and awareness-raising activity following the discovery of several active county lines has been effective in increasing the number of referrals which link sexual and criminal exploitation. The multi-agency co-located child sexual exploitation team is suitably evolving into a child criminal exploitation team, with the modern slavery and human trafficking team now appropriately aligned alongside. An additional service manager in First Response, who has operational responsibility for child criminal exploitation, means that there is an increased and important

focus on the development of work to prevent the criminal exploitation of children.

19. Where children live in homes in which domestic abuse and violence is a concern, there is prompt and effective information-sharing and careful consideration of risk and history. This leads to appropriate early intervention or signposting to relevant services. In contrast, in cases where risk is less urgent, and which are referred to the early help service, there is delay in families receiving support because of the cumbersome triage system. The local authority had identified this issue, which is being addressed by senior managers.
20. Allegations against professionals and carers are treated seriously, and there is an effective process in place to respond to allegations which meet the threshold of concern. The local authority has recognised that the current use of email processes means that there is not an effective system in place to measure the capacity and volume of work. Further development is also needed to analyse and understand patterns and trends of low-level concerns which might need to be addressed.
21. Private fostering assessments are thorough. They consider the views of the children and their parents and assess the capacity of the carer to meet the specific needs of the child they are caring for. The local authority has identified the need to streamline the referral and assessment process so that children are seen more quickly. Positively, children living in private fostering arrangements are seen regularly by their social worker to monitor their well-being during and beyond the assessment process. This continuing oversight ensures that their welfare is regularly reviewed and helps to ensure their safety.
22. The local authority has effective systems in place to monitor the welfare of children who are electively home educated, as well as those who are missing from education. Extra attention is given to the oversight of vulnerable children, including those who have an education, health and care plan. Joined-up work between different service areas and sharp tracking systems minimise the risk to young people who are out of education.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers is: good

23. Most children in care and care leavers make good progress, and their lives are better because of the improved and good services they now receive in Leicestershire. They are settled and live in homes which meet their needs and they thrive because of the good standard of care they receive. Many children receive regular visits from social workers at above the statutory minimum level. Social workers are good at ensuring that children's health and education needs are met through regular health and education reviews, and additional resources are sought and commissioned where necessary. Social workers have manageable workloads, so they can get to know the children well and undertake

direct work to help children understand their life experiences and journey into care. Homeless young people eligible to become looked after are informed of their rights and accommodated when it is in their best interests. Most children come into care when it is necessary and appropriate to do so. However, for a few children, this is not in a planned or timely manner, making it harder for them to settle when they do come into care.

24. Children return home from care when it is safe to do so, because their parents have been well supported to make the necessary changes and because risks have reduced. A few children have waited too long for their care orders to be revoked after moving back home to live with their parents. This means they have been subject to unnecessary statutory intervention for too long.
25. Children achieve permanence through adoption within the right timescales. The local authority has strengthened the service through structural changes, such as bringing the completion of child permanence reports into the adoption service. As a result, the quality of reports and support plans has improved, which in turn supports better matching and earlier planning and family finding for children. Investment in several specialist posts, including a life-story worker and birth records counsellor, strengthens the service further. The adoption panel and agency decision-maker provide a good gatekeeping service and offer challenge to ensure that the correct decisions are made for children. Children who have achieved permanence through adoption and special guardianship benefit from effective post-placement support.
26. Care planning for children who achieve permanence other than through adoption is not good enough. A full range of permanence options is considered for children, but a lack of robust management oversight and consistent challenge from independent review officers (IROs) leads to drift and delay for some children achieving permanence through long-term fostering and special guardianship. Although most children do not experience instability in their long-term foster placements, because they have not been formally matched to their permanent carers, they do not benefit from having absolute certainty about their living arrangements. Similarly, some children wait too long to achieve permanence via special guardianship orders (SGOs), which means that these children experience statutory intervention for longer than necessary.
27. The written plans for children in long-term foster care, are lengthy and difficult for the children to understand. Actions are sometimes vague and lack timescales, making it unclear exactly who will be doing what and by when to ensure that children's permanence and day-to-day needs are going to be met.
28. Brothers and sisters benefit from well-considered assessments about whether they should live together or apart. These assessments contain a strong analysis of children's individual needs and circumstances. When some brothers and sisters cannot live together, their important relationship is mostly supported

- through regular time together. Other children have complicated family time arrangements, which are sensitively managed and supported.
29. Most children in care have developed positive and trusting relationships with social workers who they have known for many years and who visit them regularly. These children have benefited from effective relationship-based practice, which has helped them to understand why they came into care, including through life-story work. The local authority has invested in an innovative electronic system which captures and stores personal information, records and memories for children in care. They feel secure in the knowledge that they have a consistent worker who they can trust. A small minority of children have experienced too many changes in social worker because of turnover in the workforce, which has made it harder for them to develop trusting or positive relationships.
 30. When changes of social workers occur, an absence of up-to-date chronologies and case summaries in children's records hinders the new workers' ability to quickly learn about the experiences of children. Similarly, placement plans are not always up to date. This gap in data does not help to inform planning or prevent children from having to repeat their stories.
 31. Where necessary, children in care and care leavers are linked with children's rights officers, who help them to express their views at statutory reviews. Independent visitors are available and carefully matched to children in care. Some children have benefited from the continuity of a visitor over some years, which has helped to mitigate the impact of other changes in their lives.
 32. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) group are an impressive assembly of children and young people who feel listened to and valued by the highly visible and effective lead member and other senior leaders. Their participation enhances their negotiation skills and helps develop their confidence and self-esteem. They are proud of the recent contact expectations statement, approved by senior leaders, which will enhance children and young people's family time experiences. Prospective foster carers hear from these groups of children and young people about what makes a good foster carer and placement, as well as about the types of complex needs that some children in care have. This enhances their understanding about the needs of children in care.
 33. The local authority is aspirational for its children in care and care leavers and holds regular events that celebrate their achievements. Children in care enjoy a range of social, sporting and creative activities that help to boost their self-confidence and are fun. One child said, 'Being in care has given me opportunities I wouldn't have.' Many children have been successful in achieving awards for their talents.
 34. The virtual school can demonstrate that work to enhance children's personal development is helping them to make better progress in their learning. School

staff speak positively about the quality of support they receive from the virtual school and the impact it has on their children. Virtual school staff work well as a team to support children in care and to provide wider enrichment activity, but there is more work to do to capture the impact of wider enrichment activity on children's progress. Effective work has improved the quality and consistency of personal education plans. A few children attend non-registered alternative provision. Although leaders know that the children are safe, they have insufficient oversight of the quality of education provided in these settings. Leaders are aware of, and have suitable plans in place to address, this.

35. Risk is well identified and managed for children in care and care leavers. This also includes the response to children placed in Leicestershire by other local authorities. Most children receive a prompt and effective response when they go missing from care. Vigorous activity is undertaken to locate them and ensure their safety. Children's views are carefully elicited through comprehensive return interviews, during which the reasons for going missing are fully explored. Social workers respond sensitively to their concerns. The local authority adopts an appropriately pragmatic and individualised approach when making decisions about how to minimise the risk of further missing episodes for the most highly vulnerable teenagers.
36. Children's physical and emotional health needs are mostly well monitored, and they have all the checks they need. The local authority proactively commissions additional resources where specific need is identified by the 'strengths and difficulties' questionnaires. Although social workers express difficulty in accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service support for children in care, therapeutic support, such as art and equine therapy, is accessed independently and funded through the pupil premium or by the local authority. Care leavers spoken to do not recall being given information about their health history, and although the local authority intends for this information to be available to them electronically, this is not yet in place.
37. Most children in care live in homes that meet their needs, where they can settle and achieve the stability that has often not been a feature of their early lives. Where appropriate, brothers and sisters live together in good quality, stable foster homes that meet their needs to a high standard. Children who live out of Leicestershire are not at a disadvantage, and they receive the same good level of support.
38. Foster carers and children in foster care homes are well supported. Carers are appropriately challenged in supervision and continue to access relevant training. A dedicated placement support team supports specialist foster carers and provides effective and intensive support to placements where children have more complex needs. This includes young people who are moving from residential care into family homes. A range of wraparound therapeutic services, including therplay and dyadic developmental psychotherapy, are delivered by specialist practitioners and clinicians. This trauma-informed approach is

improving the stability of children's placements with their foster families and is enabling more children in care to experience family life.

39. A dedicated and knowledgeable team of social workers, personal advisers and education staff provides an effective service to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. These young people live in suitable accommodation, learn English and access education. Personal advisers support them to develop independent living skills and to move into their own tenancies.
40. Care leavers value the support they receive from personal advisers who know them well and who understand their past lived experiences. The local authority is in touch with nearly all of its care leavers. Personal advisers visit regularly, often over and above what is required on the pathway plan, and according to current needs and changes in circumstances. They support young people at the start of university courses or during the move from supported to independent living. Young people's accommodation needs are addressed flexibly and responsively, and they are offered individualised support to help them to access employment and education opportunities. A majority of care leavers are making good progress through council apprenticeships, employment and further education.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is: good

41. Since the last inspection in 2016, the local authority has appropriately prioritised children's social care with the allocation of additional funding and resources. These have substantially improved service performance in specific areas, such as responses at the front door, the quality of assessments, and strong post-adoption and special guardianship support. Improvement activity and analysis is well informed by a strong culture of learning from a wide range of sources, which increasingly include feedback from service users, and are underpinned by accurate data, an embedded model of social work practice and reduced social worker caseloads. Most areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been acted on. The local authority has a good understanding of the remaining practice shortfalls, which is consistent with inspection findings and has appropriate plans in place to continue its journey of improvement.
42. There has been a noticeable increase in the pace of improvement activity since the appointment of the current director of children's services 12 months ago. Her commitment to improving the lives of children is evident, and she has established her credibility and earned the confidence of members, staff and corporate leaders.
43. The local authority is a good corporate parent. The highly visible and effective lead member is vastly experienced and is a strong advocate not only for Leicestershire's children in care and care leavers, but also for children in need of

help and protection. He has a depth of knowledge about the key issues for children who need statutory services and is therefore able to provide effective and rigorous challenge and oversight to senior leaders. Children and young people value the contact they have with him because 'he always does what he says he is going to do'.

44. Partnerships with other agencies are well established and strong. They underpin innovative work, such as the development of the vulnerability hub with police and neighbouring local authorities. School leaders value the improved and more timely response to their concerns and referrals, and the quality and impact of training provided on attachment and trauma, as well as advice and guidance about alternatives to exclusion. The police, local judiciary and CAFCASS describe positive relationships and confidence in the current local authority senior leaders, who are regarded as open and realistic about the challenges they face.
45. The local authority has successfully reduced caseloads for frontline staff, and this means that they have more time available to get to know their children well. However, half of the senior practitioners are still carrying larger caseloads than the local authority has planned for, and this reduces their capacity to undertake wider developmental work with staff. The capacity of IROs has been strengthened in response to increasing caseloads.
46. Leaders have responded appropriately to the need to reduce paperwork so that social workers can spend more time with children and families. Electronic forms and templates have been redesigned, and this reduces duplication.
47. An effective range of performance management processes means that senior leaders and managers know their services well. No major weaknesses were identified by the inspection that leaders were not already aware of and already acting on. Accurate performance information is systematically used to understand the effectiveness of service delivery and the impact of improvement activity. Senior leaders and the lead member are suitably involved with monthly keeping in touch with practice visits and practice weeks, which give them an insight into practice on the ground and provide an opportunity for social workers and managers to describe challenges and successes.
48. The safeguarding improvement and quality assurance service undertakes a comprehensive cycle of auditing activity which feeds into the programme of workshops delivered by the Practice Excellence Team (PET). Very successful 'warm' audits that include worker and service user feedback have deepened understanding of the impact of practice and mean that the local authority is well placed to improve children's experiences further.
49. There is a well-established social work model of practice throughout children's services which underpins practice improvement activity. The shared language and methodology are routinely supported by the PET through its training and development programme. Further expansion of this team is evidence of a

continuing commitment to improvement activity. Partners are also familiar with the methodology, which helps families to better understand the concerns that professionals have.

50. While significant improvement has been achieved in a wide range of service areas, actions to address some deficits have not had sufficient impact. So, while leaders have initiated campaigns to improve the quality of plans and the impact of frontline management supervision, these have not led to consistent or sustained improvements in frontline practice.
51. Maintaining a stable and sufficiently qualified workforce is recognised as an ongoing and significant challenge for Leicestershire, and an appropriate workforce strategy is in place that is having a positive impact. This includes a commitment to recruit social workers over establishment and thereby reduce the use of agency staff and reduce caseloads. Additional strategies include a focus on 'growing our own' and improved support for ASYEs and frontline social workers who increasingly value the support and opportunities for learning being provided. An appropriate focus on increasing the emotional well-being and resilience of the workforce and enabling career progression through the aspiring managers course are part of a holistic workforce strategy to improve workforce stability. As a result, more social workers are choosing to continue to work in Leicestershire, and recruitment and retention are improving.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019

This page is intentionally left blank

Draft Action Plan for Ofsted Recommendations 2019

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>
2019 1.	<p>The timeliness of assessment and help for children who are not identified as being at immediate risk of significant harm but who live with the impact of cumulative risk and harm</p> <div data-bbox="142 779 418 1104" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F7942; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Links to <u>Taking the right action at the right time</u></p> </div>	A	<p>Where children are not at risk of immediate harm they receive a timely response and do not experience delay in receiving help.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p>Timeliness of assessments to be consistently good across all teams / areas. % completed within 45 working days</p> <p>Children seen within 5 days from referral</p>	<p>2018/19 66.3%</p> <p>March 2019 – 25.4%</p>	<p>Dec 2019 88.2% avg.</p> <p>Dec 2019 41.2% seen within 5 days 71.8% seen within 10 days</p>	<p>At least 85% all teams</p> <p>70%</p>	<p>At least 95% all teams</p> <p>90%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewed focus in 2019 via management oversight and data Key Lines of Enquiry (Data KLoE) meetings have shown improvement in timeliness of single assessments. Since early 2019 steady improvements have been made in the timeliness of assessments. ▪ Revised threshold document has been launched in Q1 2019 giving all partners and the local authority a clearer, more consistent understanding of their responsibilities to support and protect children and how to make timely and good quality referrals for targeted and specialist services. ▪ Tableau report on child seen now developed to assist managers to monitor first visit to child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Majority of assessments are completed in First Response, and most of those assessments are completed in time. However, assessments completed outside of First Response require improvement to be as timely. This is being monitored by managers via monthly performance meetings chaired by Assistant Director ▪ Review steps / process at the front door through to early help triage and allocation as Ofsted identified these are “unnecessarily difficult” ▪ Actions have been identified via Monthly performance update meetings with TMs as there are some data quality issues in recording child seen date e.g. no date entered, or wrong date entered. Service Manager will ensure consistency of recording unborn as they should be marked as ‘seen’. ▪ Work is continuing in screening team to reduce screening time as some are currently taking up to 3 days which then leaves only 2 days to visit. ▪ Transfer document to be reviewed and published by end of January 2020. ▪ Review of early help assessments to take place to ensure consistent early help assessment & plans. 	<p>Lead - HoS Chris Thomas (Early Help) Hos Gareth Dakin (Fieldwork)</p> <p><i>(Service Manager First Response, Service Managers Locality Teams, Head of Service Fieldwork, Head of Service Disability and SEND)</i></p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>	
2019 2.	The timeliness of work to secure positive change for children during the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline (PLO) <div data-bbox="151 451 418 768" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Links to <u>Taking the right action at the right time</u> </div>	A	Children and families are supported to remain at home but where this is not possible decisions regarding legal permanency are made in a timely way with records that capture decisions that reflect the child's journey <u>Measures</u> Pre-proceedings process does not exceed 6 months and recorded evidence clear on work completed to support with step down and step up to care proceedings <u>Measures to be developed</u> Improvement in timeliness of agreed permanence plan for children who have been subject to pre-proceedings. Reduction in court time for proceedings Reduction in number of family member applications/coming forward to court later in proceedings. Reduction in time for legal to appoint solicitor.	Q4 2018/19 Pre-proceedings average length (open) 29 wks not yet measured	Q3 2019/20 Pre-proceedings average length (open) 31 weeks not yet measured	20* weeks (pre-proceedings)	18-20* weeks (pre-proceedings)	TBC^ TBC^	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An appropriate Public Law Order action plan is in place to address timeliness of proceedings which is led by a dedicated service manager & Head of Service with responsibility for driving forward improvements in Public Law Outline, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revised Public Law Outline tracker is being trialled to enable better gathering of information and management oversight of cases. ○ Review meetings of the plan with colleagues in legal services take place on a monthly basis chaired by Assistant Director ○ Children's Decision Making meeting and agenda includes review of Public Law Outline tracker with Service Managers. Tighter timescales and oversight are being set in Children's Decision Making meetings which is then followed up. ○ Planned audits e.g. parenting capacity assessments, specialist assessments, pre-birth assessments, cases recorded on Social Work Evidence Template (SWET) ▪ Work to improve quality of recording on the tracker has been completed in December 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Law Outline action plan needs to be evidenced as driving forward improvement and this will be measured by improved timeliness for children in pre-proceedings and proceedings as well as outcomes of the QA / audit work planned within the action plan. ▪ Developments to Mosaic to enable tracking of cases via Mosaic and Tableau reporting by May 2020. This is being prioritised. 	Lead - HoS Fieldwork Gareth Dakin <i>(Service Manager Disability and SEND, Legal Services Manager, Practice Excellence Team rep, Assistant Service Manager Fostering & Adoption, Agency Decision Maker)</i>

*Figures include 10 days from Children Decision Making Meeting to issue letter of proceedings out and meet with family to agree actions to take, followed by 4 month period of work.

^baseline needs to be measured to agree targets for 2020 and 2021

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>
2019 3.	The quality and consistency of social work practice in care planning, including the quality of supervision and oversight to prevent unnecessary drift and delay for children. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">Links to <u>Embedding Excellent Practice</u></div>	A	Plans are focused on achieving timely outcomes for children and young people, informed by a robust assessment of need and driven by systematic and high-quality management oversight & reflective supervision Supervision records evidence robust management oversight and clear timescales for actions that lead to plans for children being progressed in a timely way. Measures <i>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.</i> Assessment Planning Management oversight Performance reports show good performance in frequency of supervisions. <i>All Children have an up to date plan</i> Under 16 CiC with a manager approved plan in last 6 months (%) 16 + CiC with manager approved pathway plan in last 6 months (%) Reduction in timeframes for care proceedings % children on CP plans reviewed on time	2018/19 all thematic audits. % grade good or above 36% 44% 47% 2018 - 75% meeting standard 18/19 64.9% 18/19 82.5% Q4 18/19 40 weeks 18/19 97.3%	Q2 Impact thematic audit % grade good or above 73% 82% 55% 77% meeting Standard (Sept 19) Dec 19 – 56.3%* Dec19 – 64.4%* Latest Q3 37 weeks YTD 94.6%^	80% 80% 80% 83% 85% 85% 35 weeks	90% 90% 90% 83% 100% 100% 26 weeks 97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice standards set out expectations in relation to high quality assessment, planning, recording, and decision making. ▪ Assessment campaign has been successful in driving completion rates and quality as evidenced in performance and quality assurance / audit activity ▪ Workshops with staff undertaken in December 2019 focused around how we can strengthen the visibility of the supervision policy in practice. ▪ Dip sample/audit of supervision has been completed in October 2019, which looked at both frequency and quality of supervision. Actions are with Service Manager's to disseminate learning from this and work is underway to create child-level monitoring of supervision in tableau. ▪ As part of Public Law Outline workstream a pre-birth assessment guide has been created and is awaiting sign off at Senior Management Team (SMT). ▪ Planning campaign started on 18th November and is focused on SMART planning, child at the centre, family networks and management drive of the plan. The Measures of success will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SMART PLANS – by May 2020 100% of plans will include timescales, by March 2021 this will be 100% ○ Family Networks and Safety Plans – By May 2020 65% of children will have plans that have been developed with them, their family and support network. By 2021 this will increase to 85%. ○ Child at the centre – By May 2020 60% of case recordings and plans will be written to the child. By 2021 this will increase to 100% ○ Driving the plan – by May 2020 75% of supervision and management oversight will clearly evidence how the child's plan is being driven forward by 2021 this will increase to 95% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning campaign will run from November 2019 to May 2020. This will focus on SMART planning, supervision and management oversight to ensure it is driving the progression of plans for children and young people. ▪ Practice leaders in each team are identified, and activity is supported by Practice Excellence Team. ▪ Work is underway to review the current supervision policy and consider how we evaluate quality of supervision. Further focus groups with Managers are planned as an outcome/action from the Supervision workshops that took place in December 2019. ▪ Work planned with Independent Review Officer team to strengthen the oversight and quality assurance role of the Independent Review Officers in order to improve oversight and challenge. ▪ As part of the work around pre-birth assessments, learning sessions have taken place in First Response (facilitated by Practice excellence) and discussions are currently taking place to extend the offer out to Locality Teams. ▪ Consideration is being given that through audit and developments on the SOS mosaic development group we are able to measure the success of the planning campaign. One measure of success will be through the end-point audit which will be undertaken in May 2020 or for example, via additional monitoring of Independent Review Officers on monitoring form e.g. has the plan been written to the child? 	Lead - Head of Service Practice Excellence (Anita Gurry) <i>(Service Manager Safeguarding and Improvement, Principle Social Worker, Service Manager Looked after Children, Service Manager Locality North)</i>

*Managers in Children in Care and care leavers team since Oct 2019 are ensuring that any plans or review of plans submitted have SMART targets, therefore we have seen and expected a drop in performance for manager approved plans between October 2019 and April 2020 as plans are being reviewed and re-submitted by Managers and Social Workers over this 6 month period.

^YTD review timeliness has decreased in comparison to 18/19. This is because the service prioritised ensuring Initial child protection conferences were timely as performance has decreased during Q2 of 19/20 due to reduced admin support. This has now improved and admin vacancies have been filled/covered and work is focused on ensuring both ICPC & reviews are booked in time for Q4 of 19/20.

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>
2019 4.	<p>The quality of case recording to enable new workers to more easily understand a child's history and circumstances.</p> <p>Links to Developing Policy and Performance</p>	A	<p>Records being meaningful for children and focus on the child's story</p> <p>Quality of recording is improved</p> <p>Chronologies & Genograms are kept up to date</p> <p><u>Measures</u></p> <p>Performance/audits demonstrates that all cases have an up to date chronology</p> <p>Audit demonstrates that all cases have a detailed, up to date genogram</p>	<p>Q4 18/19 33%</p> <p>Q1 19/20 56%</p> <p>17%</p>	<p>Q1 19/20 56%</p> <p>17%</p>	80%	100%	<p>80%</p> <p>100%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers increased access to Tableau reports are quickly highlighting performance and data inaccuracy as reports are 'live'. Support available to rectify problems within Mosaic. Delays in recording are therefore addressed appropriately. Information held on children and families is more accurate and up to date. Clear improvements can be evidenced in the quality of statutory returns (July 2019). Clear improvements can be evidenced in quality of datafiles (October 2019). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh the recording policy and guidelines for staff Work is ongoing to ensure system and process (especially new suite of SOS style forms and group working) are aligned with practice and more efficient (e.g. avoid duplication of data entry) Exploring other methods of recording systems to make records more focused on the child for example 'talk to text' – support via technology etc. New suite of SOS style forms include a chronology step – once introduced this can therefore be monitored by tableau so managers have closer oversight of case recording. 'Writing records to the child' methods have been piloted in Independent Review Officers service and Children in Care. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We are also looking at other local authorities and their methods. Strategy/proposal to role this out will be brought to Extended Senior Management Team in February. Methods of recording the case summaries are being investigated (e.g. could we do a video case summary with the child). This is being progressed with the system development team to see what is / is not possible to record. 	<p>Lead - Head of Service Safeguarding and Improvement Kay Fletcher</p> <p><i>(Head of Service Business Support, Principle Social Worker, Head of Service Children in Care Virtual School Fostering & Adoption, Service Manager Looked after children, Safeguarding and Improvement Manager (Stuart Jones), Service Manager First response Children's Duty)</i></p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>
2019 5.	Planning for permanence for children whose plan is not adoption <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> Links to <u>Taking the right action at the right time</u> </div>	A	<p>Children benefit from having absolute certainty about their living arrangements at the earliest opportunity. Robust management oversight and consistent challenge from Independent Review Officers reduces drift and delay for children achieving permanence through long-term fostering or Special Guardianship Orders.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p><u>Children with a plan for permanence/where permanence has been considered:</u></p> <p>All children have a plan for permanence considered & identified at second review (new measure from Sept19) *target for identifying permanence plans at second ROA is not at 100% as we are aware there may be a small minority of children where this is not agreed due to individual circumstances.</p> <p><u>Children with permanence agreed via permanence panel: (indicators to be agreed as follows)</u></p> <p>When a placement is already identified by second review, permanence to be agreed at permanence panel within 2 months of the second review.</p> <p>When a placement has not yet been identified by second review, permanence to be agreed at permanence panel within 6 months of second review.</p> <p><small>^System developments in mosaic have been agreed which will enable reporting of measures & performance around permanence. Once we have a baseline of all children in care back keyed into the system - this will enable us to better consider and set targets for 2020 and 2021.</small></p>	Not measured	latest Oct 19 98%	98%*	98%*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matching permanency dip sample audit has been completed (Sept19) on children who achieved permanence prior to the introduction of the permanence panel in January 2018 and was agreed formally prior to this. The audit found that permanency had been previously agreed and recorded for most children. Children where permanency had not been agreed had either recently broken down or children were assessed as not yet ready for permanence. ▪ In September 2019 work was undertaken on children where a permanence plan was not agreed at second review. In many cases this was a data entry / quality issue resulting in performance increasing from 85% in Sept19 to 98% in Oct19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations from dip sample (Sept19) include system developments to record permanency decisions have been agreed, which will enable reporting of measures around permanency and targets to be set. Work underway to identify historical permanency agreed for children in care. Report / update to Senior Management Team and monthly permanence update to Lead Members is currently being finalised. ▪ Work underway to strengthen the quality assurance role of Independent Review Officers to ensure challenge and robust oversight of permanency planning to prevent drift and delay. ▪ Permanence panel continue to review paperwork and processes required to ensure a streamline system. ▪ A monthly report on position of permanence plans for children in care will be provided. 	Lead - Head of Service Children in Care, Virtual School and Fostering and Adoption Nicci Collins <i>(Service Manager Permanence & Fostering, Service Manager Safeguarding and Improvemtn, Service Manager Looked after Children, Agency Decision Maker, Service Manager Fieldwork South.</i>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2018/19	Performance Q3 19/20 or by month or latest	Target March 2020	Target March 2021	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress - December 2019	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer <i>(nominated key officers)</i>
2019 6.	Monitoring the quality and appropriateness of alternative education provision for children in care. Links to Developing Policy and Performance	A	<p>Sufficient oversight of the quality of education provided in non-registered alternative provision.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p>Tracking of progress of pupils in alternative provision demonstrates equal or better progress than they would receive in mainstream school.</p> <p>% of alternative provision that provides education to Leicestershire looked after children that has been quality assured by the commissioner</p> <p>% of alternative provision that provides education to Leicestershire looked after children that has measures in place to monitor educational progress of Looked after children</p>	n/a	Not yet measured – work ongoing with schools to agree measures & methods of reporting to LA.	100%	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We check the progress of all children in care at each of their PEPs. Our alternative provision is commissioned by the secondary education inclusion partnership, further work is required to tighten and provide oversight and assurance of the quality of provision to the local authority. Commissioners are contacted for all children in alternative provision to verify the Quality Assurance process already undertaken and actioning where appropriate as well as requesting progress information for the child that demonstrates equal or better progress than they would receive in mainstream school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures are in place and being tightened to ensure that LCC officers have oversight and assurance when we are notified of any child in care is in alternative provision. A revised procedure to ensure closer monitoring of alternative provision is being taken to Leicestershire School Heads meetings in Q4 2019/20. This will include reportable measures that need to be agreed by Leicestershire schools. 	<p>Lead -</p> <p>Head of Service Children in Care, Virtual School and Fostering and Adoption Nicci Collins</p> <p><i>(Virtual School Head, Inclusion Manager)</i></p>



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2020**

**LOCAL AREA INSPECTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND
DISABILITIES (SEND)**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Ofsted SEND Inspection Framework and to provide members with a summary of Leicestershire's strengths and areas that require further development.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. New duties that were introduced in 2014 require local areas to be inspected regarding provision for children and young people with SEND. These duties are contained in the Children and Families Act (2014) (the Act) and are amplified in the 'Special education needs and disabilities code of practice: 0-25 years (the Code of Practice).
3. The Code of Practice is the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DoH). The Minister of State for Children and Families has tasked Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) with inspecting local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling these duties.
4. Ofsted and CQC are required to carry out their work in ways that encourage the services they inspect and regulate to improve, be user-focused and be efficient and effective in their use of resources.

SEND Inspection

5. The SEND inspection is undertaken by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and provides an external evaluation of how well a local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities in order to support their development.
6. The inspection will review how local areas support children and young people with SEND to achieve the best possible outcomes, such as being able to live independently, secure meaningful employment and be well prepared for their adult lives. Therefore, these inspections are designed to hold local areas to account, they also intend to assist local areas in improving and developing their processes and

support systems in order that local areas become more effective and deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

7. It is important to note that these inspections will evaluate how effectively the local area meets its responsibilities. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early years' settings, schools and further education (FE) providers.
8. The local area is the geographical area of the local authority. However, the responsibility of the local area for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities extends to those who are residents of the local area but attend educational establishments or receive services outside the local authority's boundaries.
9. The starting point for inspection is the expectation that the local area should have a good understanding of how effective it is. Leaders for the local area should be able to accurately assess how well it meets its responsibilities and should have an understanding of strengths and aspects that require further development. Inspectors will test out the accuracy of this understanding during the inspection as they make their evaluation. These strengths and areas for development are contained within Leicestershire's Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), a summary of which is detailed below. This document continues to be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect further developments as they emerge.
10. The local area will be provided with five working days' notice of the inspection and inspectors will be in the area for five days, making the inspection two weeks long in total. There will be a series of focus groups and visits to providers that will take place over days six to nine. During the inspection, inspectors will visit:
 - An Early Years setting and a primary and secondary school;
 - A special school
 - An FE college
 - Independent provider
11. Inspectors will also wish to meet with staff and governors within the school, children and young people and parents and carers.
12. The Inspection Framework evaluates the local area's provision through the inspection of the following domains:
 - How effectively does the local area identify children and young people with SEND?
 - How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND?
 - How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND?
13. After the inspection Ofsted and CQC will publish an inspection report in the form of an inspection letter. The report will not contain an inspection judgement as with other Ofsted inspections. The report will be addressed to the local authority and sent to the Chief Executive of the CCG. This will outline the evidence that inspectors reviewed and provide a summary of key findings including strengths and areas

requiring further development. In addition, reports may also include areas of concern that may, subject to determination by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), require a written statement of action to be submitted to identify how concerns will be remedied.

14. Since the introduction of this inspection regime, there have been 113 local area inspections of SEND. Of these 113 inspections, 58 areas have been provided with a written statement of actions and 70% of these have reported joint planning and commissioning as an area for improvement. 71% of those areas receiving a written statement of action were inspected in 2018/19 compared with 29% receiving a written statement of action during 2016/17. In more recent inspections, social care input and advice into EHCPs has become increasingly more prevalent for those areas receiving a written statement of action.
15. Should the local area be required to draw up a statement of action they must publish the plan within 70 working days of receiving the report. The written statement must:
 - State who it is proposed should take the action
 - Include a statement of the period within which the action is to be taken.
16. This statement must be shared with HMCI and the Secretary of State. The local authority and every other person or body who has cooperated must publish the written statement on its website.

Leicestershire's Strengths and Areas for Development

17. Leicestershire developed an initial Self Evaluation Framework that was signed off by the SEND Partnership Board in March 2019. In response to improved and updated data this is currently being reviewed and refined to better highlight key achievements and areas for development. A summary of strengths and areas for development are highlighted below:

Strengths.

18. There is clear commitment from senior leaders across the partnership to the SEND agenda with a focus on the need to work together on improving the identification, and assessment of need and the timely provision of support, thus preventing the escalation of needs. This is vital to ensure the efficient use of the high needs budget. This can be demonstrated by the significant and robust development plan in place that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee had sight of at its meeting in November 2019. This is a three-year plan that has clearly defined objectives and milestones and is monitored by the Children and Family Service Departmental Management Team.
19. There is a highly supportive Lead Member for Children and Family Services.
20. The Leicestershire school offer is excellent with 100% of area Special Schools rated by Ofsted as Outstanding or Good. This compares favourably with the national average of 91.7%. 87.9% of mainstream primary schools are rated as outstanding or good compared with 87.4% nationally. Mainstream secondary schools also compare well with the national average (73.8%) with 78.3% being rated as Good or Outstanding.

21. The 0-19 Health Child Programme has developed an app to support children and young people's social emotional and mental health needs that provides information and access to support across the county.
22. Leicestershire's education attainment data shows the area as being in the top quartile for those children and young people with an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) when compared with statistical neighbours.
23. There are good examples of training taking place across the County that is having an impact on children and young people. For example, a roll out programme of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) to support schools to develop their capacity and provision for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. This training is for schools and settings and 18% of schools have a trained ELSA. The Local Authority Autism and Learning Support teams provide training to parents and schools; during 2018/19 3,000 participants attended training and 85% of schools across Leicestershire received input from Autism services.
24. Partner agencies make referrals to the Front Door appropriately and safeguarding risks are highlighted to be dealt with quickly. Current re-referral rates have reduced from the previous year, indicating that interventions are appropriate, timely and successful.
25. Families who have a child with a disability are able to access services through a Short Breaks, Family Support and Occupational Therapy panel. In the recent Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection, the Disabled Children's Service was recognised for providing a good level of service to these families.
26. An Inclusion Service has been developed, drawing on existing teams and some additional staffing to provide a graduated response to schools for children and young people with medical needs, missing education, Elective Home Education. This service links with the Secondary Education Inclusion Partnership (SEIP) and Oakfield Primary and outreach support. The SEIPs have been successful in reducing permanent exclusions, as compared to national and statistical neighbour figures up to the academic year 2017/18. Leicestershire continues to be in the top quartile, with figures of exclusions well below national and statistical neighbours.
27. Work to prepare young people for adulthood has improved significantly. This has been supported by the development of the 'Preparing for Adulthood Service' within the Adults and Communities Department. Information sharing between the Disabled Children's Service, SENA and Adult Services is far more timely allowing for earlier transition planning for children as they move into early adulthood. The imminent co-location of these three services into County Hall will further strengthen this earlier and stronger planning.
28. The relationship between Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Local Authority and the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum has strengthened in the last six months and the Parent Carer Forum is well engaged with the SEND Partnership Board and continues to be involved in the co-production of key pieces of work including the review of EHCPs, the development of the Leicestershire Neurodevelopment Pathway, SEN Transport policy and a significant overhaul of the Local Offer.

Children, young people and parents and carers have also been involved in the development of new provision in the county.

Areas for Development

29. The local area recognises the need to improve approaches to joint planning and commissioning at both a strategic level and at a child level. Whilst some services can demonstrate a high level of commitment to children and young people with SEND such as the Hearing and Vision Support team who meet regularly with NHS colleagues and run joint clinics, early notification from health through Section 23 notifications is not consistent. This often means that some support for some children is not provided as early as it could be and therefore some parents may report the need to tell their story more than once. Work is underway with CCG colleagues to identify joint commissioning priorities and these are likely to be determined in February 2020.
30. Whilst the Local Offer is generally compliant, the local area recognises that it is not always easy for children, young people and parents and carers to navigate around the system and it is not always user-friendly. The Local Authority, Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum and CCGs have already commenced work to undertake a thorough review of the Local Offer with a view to an updated site being launched in Spring 2020. A holding web-site is available to the public with a focus on education provision in the county.
31. The local area recognises that too many children are being educated outside of the county and in independent provision. The Council has committed to a significant capital programme that will provide in excess of 600 more specialist places for Leicestershire children and young people. However, the local area continues to work with children and their families to ensure that where possible children can be educated within their communities and as close to home as possible.
32. EHCPs are compliant with the Code of Practice and sections of the EHCP have been further strengthened since the conversion from statements in 2014. For example, the one-page profile of children does provide relevant information on the child or young person and refers to aspirations and provides for parental input. EHCPs have also improved with regard to highlighting the strengths of the child or young person. However, quality information from health and social care/early help is variable and is often not specific. Officers within the SENA service have further improved EHCPs using SMART outcomes and have been clearer about the type of provision required to meet these outcomes. This is not consistent across the service and further work is required to improve working practices in this area. The service is being subject to an intense review of its operating procedures and processes. This will also include how these services interact with other partners such as schools and health providers. The implementation of recommendations arising from this review will be implemented in Summer 2020.
33. Attendance at annual reviews by professionals outside of the school sector is also inconsistent and attendance at reviews where children are beginning a transition phase are not always prioritised often leading to refreshed EHCPs being delayed. The review, referred to above will assist with improvements in this area.

34. Oversight relating to educational outcomes for children being educated in independent schools is not sufficiently robust. Additional capacity has been identified within the Local Authority SENA service and School Effectiveness, in order to improve this monitoring and move children into better quality provision that can meet their outcomes.
35. The numbers of requests for EHCPs and the number of EHCPs in the system continues to grow which is putting pressure on all partners. This is an issue that has been recognised nationally. This, along with the findings from the recent Education Select Committee Report, has led to the government ordering a wholesale review of SEND. However, timescales for this review are yet to be determined and Ofsted and the CQC have committed to completing their current five-year programme of inspection that commenced 4 years ago.

Conclusions

36. Local areas are subject to a SEND inspection. This will be a joint inspection of the local area and will be carried out by Ofsted and the CQC. In Leicestershire the inspection area will consist of the Local Authority (Children and Family Services, Adult & Communities and Public Health), West Leicestershire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG, health service providers, schools, settings and independent providers. The inspectors will be primarily concerned with how well the local area works together to meet what has been set out in the SEND reforms of 2014.
37. Whilst there are a number of key areas for development Leicestershire has responded well to the SEND reforms introduced in 2014 and services are well placed to identify and support children and families who are experiencing issues relating to SEND.
38. Despite not yet being subject to a local area inspection for SEND the local area is well aware of the areas that require further work to improve outcomes for children. To respond to this, the Local Authority has a robust development plan in place with senior officer oversight to further improve and develop services to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The High Needs Development plan is responding to pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and to the increasing numbers of EHCPs in the system. These are challenges that are being experienced across the country and the development plan puts Leicestershire in a strong position to respond positively.

Background Papers

SEND Code of Practice.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

SEND Handbook for the Inspection.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

39. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

40. There is no requirement to include an EHRI assessment as the report does not propose any changes to the Council's policies, procedures, functions and services. The report is for information only and details the outline of the SEND inspection framework.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

None

Appendices

None

Officer to Contact

Name: Paula Sumner

Telephone: 0116 305 1454

Email: Paula.Sumner@Leics.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

21st JANUARY 2020

CARE LEAVER OFFER

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

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to bring to the Committee's attention the activity of Leicestershire County Council's Care Leavers Team and the support provided to Care Leavers in Leicestershire.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council operates its duties in line with statutory guidance including the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers statutory guidance, The Care Leavers Act 2000 and Chapter 1, Clause 3, of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which relates to extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25.

Background

3. Leicestershire County Council has statutory duties to eligible young people (previously looked after children), called care leavers. It undertakes statutory responsibilities by providing advice and support in several ways for example, through the website, telephone contact, support groups and through Personal Advisors. A Personal Advisor is an allocated worker for a young person, up until the age of 25 years.
4. In 2016, as part of the OFSTED inspection of children's social care it was recommended, in respect of care leavers, that action was taken to 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. Work to address this formed part of the Continuous Improvement Plan - The Road to Excellence 2017-2020.

5. In January 2019, the Department for Education National Advisor for Care Leavers (Mark Riddell) was invited to visit the County Council. Mr Riddell met with the Lead Member, the Director of Children and Family Services, the Senior Management Team, members of staff from the Care Leavers Team and young people. Following the visit Mr Riddell reported that there was commitment to care leavers in Leicestershire from political leaders to front line practitioners and all were ambitious for children in care and care leavers. He made 17 recommendations to assist the service further in its improvement journey. The recommendations were:
- a) To consider the Champion Model Approach in which elected members champion a specific area for care leavers.
 - b) Membership of Corporate Parenting Board to be extended to include Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), probation and housing and for themed Boards to be considered.
 - c) The Local Authority to consider several ringfenced apprentice opportunities for care leavers.
 - d) Leaving care training should be mandatory for all staff from the front door to all social workers, foster carers and elected members.
 - e) The Housing Offer to be reviewed.
 - f) The local authority to set a target of between 70% to 80% for Education Employment and Training (EET).
 - g) Pathways to be developed so that care leavers and agencies are clear what their core offer to care leavers is.
 - h) Independent Reviewing Officers to consider reviewing Pathway Plans up to 25yrs using a RAG approach.
 - i) Care planning to start at an earlier age – at around 14yrs.
 - j) Paperwork and admin processes to be reviewed to support the work.
 - k) The Local Authority to consider whether it can introduce a one referral pathway – i.e. the Pathway Plan to reduce the number of referrals and duplication of information being passed to agencies.
 - l) A Council wide offer to be developed
 - m) The YOS/Probation Model where specialism is shared through transfer points to assist leaving care staff to have a greater understanding of the various specialisms to be considered.
 - n) Elected members to push for free transport for care leavers across the County.
 - o) The local authority to re-consider its university offer to care leavers.
 - p) For the LA/Corporate Parents to consider a place for care leavers to meet such as a drop-in /Hub.
 - q) The offer from 21yrs to 25yrs to be developed further by key partners/ agencies
6. Mr Riddell returned in November 2019 and following the visit he commented that 'Throughout the follow up visit I heard about the rapid progress you have made to your offer to care leavers since my two-day formal visit earlier this year... what I heard was a very strong offer to care leavers and from what I have seen I would rate services as in the top ten most improved local authorities.'

7. The November 2019 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services graded services for children in care and care leavers to be Good.

Care Leaver Services in Leicestershire

8. The Council aims to be the best performing local authority in the country against well-defined ambitions and measures, and where it is not yet there targets for annual improvement will be set. For example, ensuring all young people have SMART plans which they understand and help write to ensure they are given all the support and advice they need to make positive life choices.
9. The Council aims to be open and inclusive. To this effect, Care Leavers play a key role in shaping the service and holding the authority to account for its actions. The County Council is ambitious for its children and young people and strives to ensure the outcomes it achieves are the best.
10. The Care Leavers Offer sets out the Council's and partners' commitment to care leavers, covering -
- Benefits and income: There is now a protocol in place with the Department of Work and Pensions that recognises the specific needs of care leavers claiming benefits and helping them maximise their income.
 - Careers Advice: The careers advice service has been brought in-house. This has helped to increase the number of care leavers in education, employment and training.
 - Multi-agency risk panel: A multi-agency risk-management panel meets every 2 months to discuss the needs of the most vulnerable care leavers and put together plans to help them.
 - Higher Education: As at the beginning of October 2019, 8 young people started at University, 7 in their second year 3 in their 3rd year and 1 in the final year of Masters.
11. On their 18th and 21st Birthdays, care leavers are sent a letter from the Director of Children and Family Services enclosing a copy of 'The Offer' and setting out the services and support on offer. This is followed up with an annual letter until they reach 25.

Care Leavers Covenant

12. The Care Leavers Covenant has been developed in response to 'Keep on Caring', a major policy document (published in 2016) on support for young people from care to independence. A key policy commitment in the 'Keep on Caring' paper is a strategic pledge to introduce a Care Leaver Covenant. This is a promise made by the private, public and voluntary sectors to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently.

13. Organisations can offer opportunities and a new way of thinking to aid the care leavers in moving forward successfully to the next phase of their lives. Each organisation that commits to the Covenant will be able to offer a support package to care leavers that is tailored to its specific expertise.
14. The County Council is developing its links with local business and partners as part of the Care Leavers Covenant.

The Draft Care Leavers Protocol (housing)

15. The draft Care Leavers Housing Protocol sets out a formal agreement between the County Council, the seven District Councils, The Bridge (a housing support service) and partner agencies working with care leavers.
16. The Protocol establishes the aims, roles and responsibilities of signatory partners towards accommodation pathways for care leavers and sets out the support offered to care leavers, in particular in ensuring the most suitable accommodation is provided for this group of young people. Dialogue with Districts to finalise the protocol is ongoing and their intention is to complete and launch the Protocol in early 2020.
17. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure the effective discharge of corporate responsibilities between the County Council (Children and Family Services), Local Housing Authorities, The Bridge and other partners by jointly addressing the diverse accommodation needs of young people leaving care in Leicestershire and related equality issues to prevent such issues as homelessness.

Council Tax Exemption

18. All district councils in Leicestershire have now agreed that care leavers should be exempt from the payment of Council Tax until the age of 25. This arrangement was put in place in recognition of the particular difficulties faced by care leavers when living independently for the first time, often without the support of family or much financial education. This has been in place since 1 April 2019.
19. A joint protocol is being developed with the Job Centre and the DWP to ensure care leavers are supported more effectively, should they need to claim benefits.

Corporate Parenting

20. In December 2019, Cabinet approved a revised Corporate Parenting Strategy, following a period of consultation. The strategy outlined the local authority's duties, responsibilities and ambitions for Children in Care and Care Leavers. The role of the Lead Member and Elected Members is outlined in the strategy. In addition, a five-member panel has reviewed the role of Corporate Parenting and as an outcome the local authority has now established three Member Champions for Children in Care and Care Leavers. Each Member Champion has

one of the following lead areas; Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Accommodation and Education, Employment and Training

21. Member Champions are appointed to support the work of lead officers and partners by championing the area of interest for Children in Care and Care Leavers, to ensure that action is being taken to improve their outcomes and to address shortcomings in service provision in the relevant areas.
22. The Member Champions will also discuss the needs of CIC so that decisions about the offer reflects Care Leavers' journey and the importance of 'starting early' to make the most difference for our children and young people.

Voice

23. As well as the Children in Care Council there is a SYPAC (supporting young people after care). This is a group of care leavers that meets monthly to socialise and help the local authority and other agencies review the work they do with them and future plans and policies

Apprenticeships

24. On 30th May 2018, People Strategy Board agreed to support the proposal to ring-fence apprenticeship opportunities for Leicestershire County Council (LCC) care leavers. This decision was based on statistics showing that Leicestershire care leavers were over ten times more likely than their peers to be not in education, employment or training (NEET).
25. Other local authorities (statistical or regional neighbours) at that time provided a variety of opportunities for their own care leavers to be supported into employment within their own organisations, however prior to this scheme the County Council did not offer any discrete support to care leavers that enabled them to access LCC apprenticeships.
26. Statutory guidance evidenced that the ring-fencing of apprenticeships for care leavers was a legitimate way of supporting them into EET, and LCC People Strategy Board agreed to back the proposed scheme that had a target of filling six apprenticeship posts by April 2019.
27. We currently have 5 apprentices within the authority and over the next year will further develop the processes and support to those coming through the system as new apprentices in the County Council.

Outcomes

28. There are currently 283 care leavers aged between 18 and 25 in Leicestershire.
29. At the end of Quarter 2 2019/20, the number of pathway plans completed was 87.6% (198 of 226). The plans are identifying more clearly outcomes for the young people to enable them to move into independence with the skills they need.

30. At the end of Quarter 2, 90.4% (94 of 104). of Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation Young people are reflecting that they enjoy the support they get in their accommodation from their Personal Advisors which helps them to maintain their accommodation.
31. 97.1% (101 of 104) of Care Leavers were in contact with the Department at the end of Quarter 2. This ensures that young people are supported above and beyond what is needed for them to make transitions into independent living and it is known where young people need extra support.
32. At the end of Quarter 2, 60.6% (63 of 104) of care leavers were in Education Employment or training. Young people are saying they want to look at vocational courses as well as University for further study, which is positive.

Resource Implications

33. The Care Leaver team supports a range of care leaver needs. This includes provision of an allowance, setting up grant, support with education or training, transport, maintaining relationships with family, at times with accommodation and advice and guidance.
34. With the new duty for local authorities to provide support to the age of 25 came a government grant of £40K. This doesn't over the expectations placed upon local authorities but is likely to be the same amount next financial year.

Conclusion

35. The Children in Care Service's Care Leavers Team, supported by the Virtual School has achieved significant success in 2018-19, particularly in relation to outcomes for Care Leavers.
36. The new responsibilities place new duties on the Council to consider how these services are delivered and whether current provision is satisfactory.
37. During 2019 the Service made progress against all 17 recommendations made by the National Advisor for Care Leavers. However, further progress will be hampered without investment.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

38. None

Equality and Human Rights Implications

There are no equality or human rights implications arising from the report.

Officers to Contact

Sharon Cooke, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care
Sharon.Cooke@leics.gov.uk

Tel: 0116 3055479

Nicci Collins, Head of Service, Children in Care

Nicci.Collins@leics.gov.uk

Tel: 0116 3054504

Angie Lymer-Cox, Service Manager, Children in Care Service

Angie.Lymer-Cox@leics.gov.uk

Tel: 0116 2323232

This page is intentionally left blank



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PUPILS MISSING OUT ON EDUCATION IN LEICESTERSHIRE

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of Leicestershire children who are missing from education and the work taking place across the county to support them.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. An information report on Pupils Missing Education was submitted to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 June 2018. This provided an update on the current position in Leicestershire in relation to Children Missing Education (CME), Elective Home Education (EHE) and Pupils Missing out on Education (PME), and provided data relevant to the context of the Forgotten Children report.
3. On 5 November 2018 a report was submitted to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing an overview of children who are missing out on education in response to the review of the 'Forgotten Children: Alternative Provision and the Scandal of Ever Increasing Exclusions'
4. Since this time additional Government reports and research have continued to be published to further highlight the need to respond to children and young people who are at risk of missing out on education, including The Timpson Review of Exclusion (2019) and Ofsted's Home Education Study: Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools (2019). This report therefore extends its focus to take into account the above reports.

Background

5. In November 2013 Ofsted published a report entitled 'Pupils Missing out on Education' which detailed how local authorities are required to fulfil their statutory duties regarding educational provision and safeguarding for those children who do not, or cannot, attend full time education. The report defined Pupils Missing out on Education (PME) as children of compulsory school age who are not accessing full-time education (either in school or in alternative provision). In its guidance to schools and local authorities, Ofsted advised that all schools (including academies, free, independent, private and non-maintained schools) must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register and must inform local authorities of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 15 days or more (whether consecutive or cumulative) without permission.

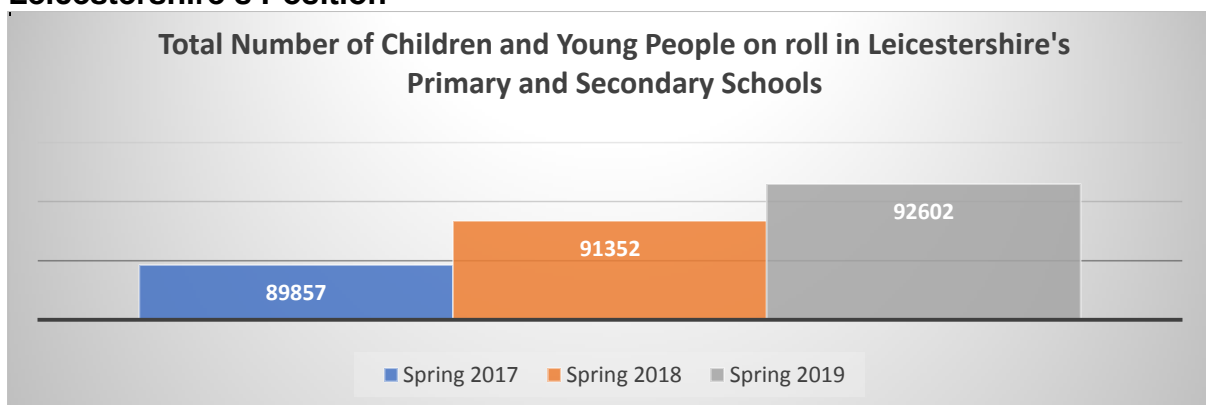
6. 'Forgotten Children' (July 2018) and 'Skipping School: Invisible Children' (2019) highlighted concerns around the children who are missing out on educational opportunities due to a rise in exclusions, an increase in the numbers of children having poor quality outcomes when accessing alternative provisions, families opting to home educate due to unmet Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream settings, and children who are 'off rolled' when their needs are not being met within a mainstream setting.
7. Following these reports, there were two papers that set out recommendations in response:
 - a) The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019) highlights 30 recommendations to which the Government, Department for Education, Ofsted, Local Authorities and Schools should respond in order to develop a consistent approach, minimising the need to exclude and on which expresses that there is more that can be done to ensure that every exclusion is lawful, reasonable and fair and that permanent exclusions is always a last resort, used only when nothing else will do.
 - b) The Ofsted research study within the East Midlands explored 'Moving to home education in secondary school' (2019). It raised concern that the decision for parents to home-educate was not always a positive one for all concerned and suggests there is increasing evidence that home education can be a last resort for some families when relationships have broken down between schools and children or parents. The recommendations around this report strongly recommend that local authorities and schools develop clear processes for working together as soon as there is talk of a child home educating.
8. These reports and recommendations continue to conclude that if children are potentially 'invisible' they are at risk of not receiving an adequate education or at risk of harm.

Statutory Duties of the Local Authority

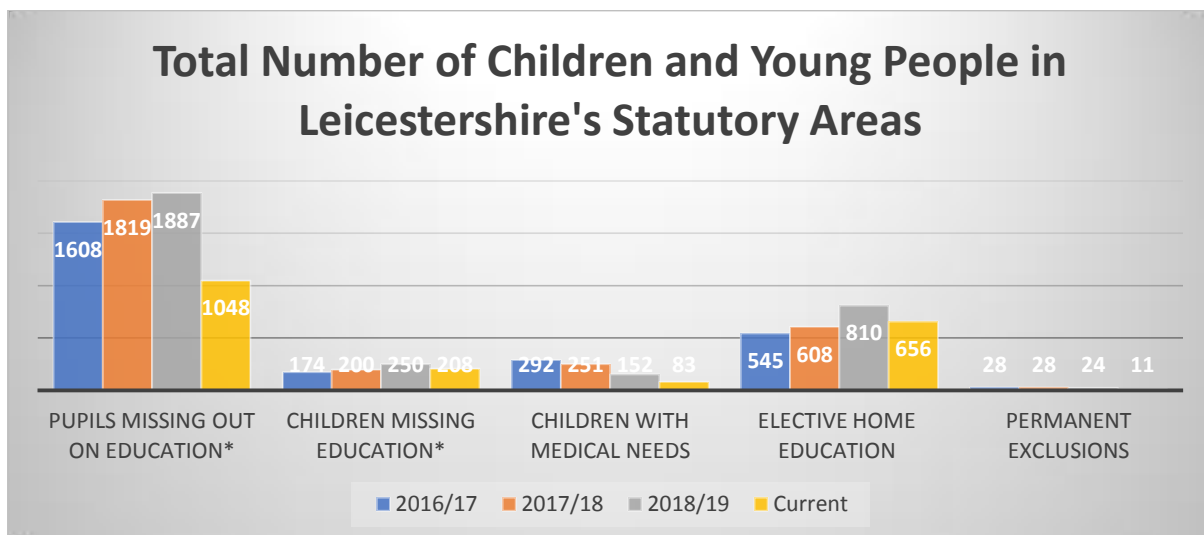
9. Schools must monitor pupils who are missing out on education and in most cases, they will remain the responsibility of the school where they are on roll. However, in some cases the statutory duty for a child's education becomes the responsibility of the local authority, for example Children Missing Education, Children with Medical Needs, Elective Home Education and Excluded Pupils.
10. Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.
11. Children with Medical Needs: local authorities must arrange suitable fulltime education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness would otherwise not receive suitable education.

12. Elective Home Education: Since April 2019 local authorities duties have been further clarified by the Department for Education (DfE) as there is no direct legal requirement for the authority regarding Home Education; however, the local authority does have powers at its disposal if it appears that a child is not receiving an adequate, safe or appropriate education as set out in the Education Act 1996.
13. This states that a local authority in England must ensure that its relevant education functions and training functions are (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom this subsection applies. The Act also requires parents to provide an efficient, full time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs which the child may have, and states that the local authority must act if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education. The Act also requires authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
14. Within Leicestershire, DfE guidance is followed in that informal enquiries will be made that include a request to see the child, either in the home or in another location which is offered by the Inclusion Team, but the parent is under no legal obligation to agree to this simply in order to satisfy the local authority as to the suitability of home education, although a refusal to allow a visit can in some circumstances justify service of a notice or if safeguarding concerns exist, a report to social care.
15. Excluded Pupils: The Education Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils (England) Regulation 2007 states that for permanent exclusions, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the sixth school day of the exclusion. This will be the pupil's 'home authority' in cases where the school is maintained by (or located within) a different local authority. In addition, where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the local authority may need to review the plan or reassess the child's needs, in consultation with parents, with a view to identifying a new placement.

Leicestershire's Position



Sourced: School Census



Pupils Missing Education

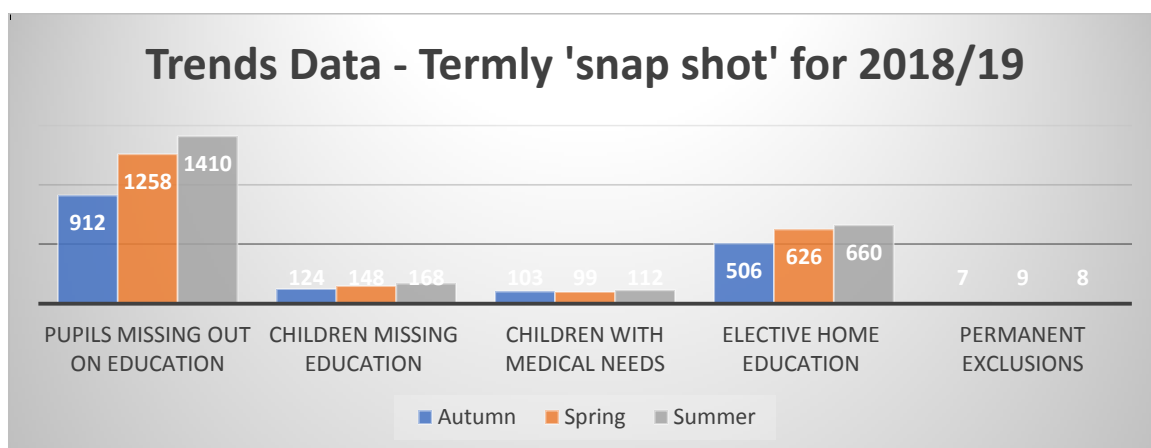
16. The data around Pupils Missing Education (PME) is significantly higher than other cohorts as they are children and young people who may remain on the roll of a school. As defined by the 2013 Ofsted report 'Pupils Missing out on Education', a pupil is classed as PME if they fall into one of the PME groups listed below and are not receiving a full-time education on the specified 'census' date of the monthly data return.
17. The main PME groups include pupils whom:
- have been permanently excluded;
 - have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised learning plans: this means that, by arrangement, they do not attend their usual school full time;
 - have mental health needs and access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), either as an in-patient or through services provided in the community;
 - have medical needs other than mental health needs;
 - rarely attend school and have personalised learning plans as part of attempts to reintegrate them into full-time education;
 - are pregnant or are young mothers of compulsory school age;
 - have complex needs and no suitable school place is available.
 - Or (Children Missing Education) not attending school due to:
 - are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them;
 - are new to the country and are awaiting a school place;
 - are from a Traveller background and alternative provision has been made;
 - have moved from another area and a school place has not been secured; this may include children who are looked after.
18. Comparative data for Leicestershire's learners shows that whilst the numbers of children and young people on roll has increased by 0.11% in the last year, the numbers of pupils missing out on education has risen considerably more by

3.73%. This percentage includes young people who are missing education, which has seen an increase of 25%.

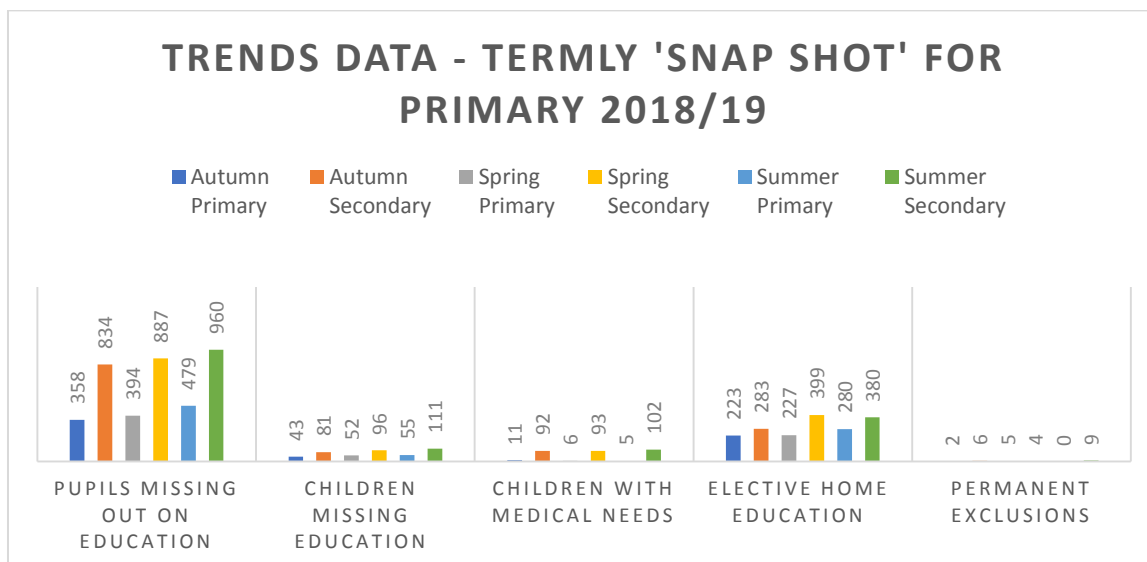
19. Within Leicestershire the definition of Children Missing Education has an extended remit wider than that of the local authorities' statutory duties. This is to enable opportunities for early intervention that tracks, prioritises and offers support for children and young people who are at risk of, or are missing education. The category includes Children Missing Education who remain on the role of a school but have not attended for a significant period of time during the monthly data period. This group of children are not one of the categories described in paragraph 17 for PME, however they are monitored as identified alongside the PME cohort.
20. Areas where a fall in vulnerable students has been seen include Permanent Exclusions (14.28% decrease) and Children with Medical needs (37.44 % decrease). The section 'Developments within Leicestershire' below will detail some of the interventions that have been put in place that have contributed to these decreases.
21. Another area of education that the local authority has a duty to monitor and offer support to is Elective Home Education. In this area Leicestershire has seen a significant increase of 33.22% between 2017/18 and 2018/19. There is no single reason for this increase and it is inline with the national trend.

Termly Trends Data

22. The data regarding pupils missing out on Education is collated monthly. To show the picture of trends through specific times of the year the following shows a snap shot of data for the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms, which enables the Inclusion Service to monitor particular patterns.



Breakdown of Primary and Secondary:



23. The trends data shows that all areas have significantly increased in the spring term, other than Children with Medical Needs. For Children with Medical Needs the main increase is the Summer Term. There is significantly higher risk of pupils missing out in education at a secondary education. Primary tends to have a steady increase throughout the year of children who are within the statutory cohorts, however at a secondary level the Spring Term appears to have a specific shift for home education which again falls in the Summer Term.

Developments within Leicestershire

24. Leicestershire Children and Young People's Service is currently working to address the recommendations on both the Timpson Review of School Exclusion and Moving to home education in secondary school (2019).
25. In October 2019 the Inclusion Service was reviewed and reconfigured to realign staff to include a case management system so that the service is in a better position to offer early intervention and where required early assessment and review of young people who are missing out on education. Staff are now aligned to different cohorts of children missing education:
26. Since September 2019, where a school has concerns regarding any behaviours, educational development or risk of exclusion, they can work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and the wider educational networks to consider additional support or alternative placements that may be required. This includes interventions such as a duty system being set up by the Inclusion Service that both parents and professionals can gain advice on educational matters when they are unclear what route they should take. Regular Inclusions Forums that schools attend provide a multi-agency approach to the sharing of best practice and access to additional services where required. The forums identify and review information on a pupil needs and can track a pupil's journey with the school to provide bespoke support packages and education plans. These forums operate at Early Years; Primary; Secondary and Post 16 age groups.
27. Services within the Children and Families Department are able to utilise tracking and monitoring data to inform strategic planning and the allocation of funding of local Alternative Provision where required, with a strong focus on

early intervention for children at risk of exclusion and the strategic elements around monitoring prevention through groups such as:

- Oakfield Management Oversight Committee
- Secondary Education Inclusion Partnership (SEIP) Core Group/Chairs Meeting and Executive Group
- Inclusion Forums
- SEIP panel meetings

These multi agency forums enable a 'check and challenge' approach to resource ensuring that it is allocated with consideration of needs.

28. Governor Support Services and Education Effectiveness Officers offer support and training to both Governors, Head Teachers and Senior Leaders to enable them to keep up to date with current legislation around exclusions through Governor Training, New Head's induction and through updating on regular articles. Where required, individual support is implemented.
29. The development of data reporting through Tableau has increased the transparency of when children move out of schools, where they move to and why. This data is reviewed by both Education Effectiveness Partners and the Inclusion Service Manager to understand the inclusivity of the schools the Department works with. Where concerns are raised, a joint approach is co-ordinated, bringing services together to offer support to schools who may be experiencing difficulties around vulnerable students. This has enabled the local authority to have a clear role, working with schools, in reviewing this information to identify trends, taking action where necessary and ensuring children are receiving suitable education at their destination.
30. Between April - September 2019, all Children with Medical Needs cases were reviewed to look at the appropriateness of provision through a case management plan, do, review process; this included checking that the health needs were being responded to by health along with reviewing the appropriateness of the education that was being provided. All cases have now been reviewed and packages are now agreed locally through multi-agency meetings where schools remain central to the support offered. As part of this a recoupmnt policy from schools has been introduced where alternative provision is required. This has enabled the budget to become more stable and within the allocated funding, reduce double funding, as well as offer resource for more bespoke educational packages for children who are not able to attend school due to medical needs.
31. Within Leicestershire there is one pupil referral unit for the Primary Sector (key stage 1 & 2) - Oakfield Short Stay School. The Secondary sector (Key stage 3 & 4) are supported by the Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs), where funding has been devolved to five school groups to support young people who are at risk of/or have been permanently excluded from school.
32. Although both Oakfield and the five SEIPs have differing support structures the fundamental delivery methods of the services provide support and outreach to schools who have difficulties managing students who present with challenging behaviours and to support children and young people in to the right educational placements. This includes:

- Inclusions Panels where schools can discuss and gain advice regarding students from multi-disciplinary teams (these include education specialists, peer support from schools, CYP Wellbeing Services and Health Specialists, and others where appropriate).
 - In school support - Graduated Response Practitioners (Oakfield) and Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs) have staff who go in to school to support the implementation of assessment, plans, examples of delivery methods, resources and support with reviews. This helps the school to 'up skill' on techniques and resources to meet the needs of the child and enable them to remain in school. These staff also provide support with appropriate managed moves to better accommodate the needs of the child.
 - Short term/dual placements to help manage the needs of the young person through using short term interventions
 - Arranging longer term placements where required where the school environment will not meet a young person needs through special schools or alternative providers (although this is only used as a last resort).
33. The local authority is in the process of reviewing and implementing a review of the Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs). These currently have various functions around Fair Access and Exclusions; however, in the last two years they have begun to take on additional responsibilities to encourage the early intervention of support when schools are finding difficulties in educating children and young people. These additional remits have included:
- Managing the Inclusion Forums for secondary aged pupils;
 - Overseeing managed moves between schools to ensure that it is in the best interest of the child and offering support to the receiving school to aid transition
 - In school support to help schools, children and young people to maintain attendance and prevent exclusion
 - Support to Children with Medical Needs and EHCPs who experience social, emotional mental illness, providing interventions locally and increasing the opportunity to maintain mainstream school placements.
34. During 2019 the Inclusion Service was involved in the East Midlands Regional Research conducted by Ofsted to understand the pathway for children moving in to home education. The study suggests that there is a significant gap in support and steps that help all parents and children to make a fully informed and positive choice about home education. It also found that home education can be a last resort for some families when relationships have broken down between schools and children or parents. Although Ofsted recognises that home education is a legitimate parental choice and can be a positive decision when parents are well equipped to provide a good education, they state that they don't believe that children should be moved to home education simply to resolve difficulties in school.
35. Since the restructure of the Inclusion Service, the County Council now has dedicated workers to support children and young people who are in Home Education. Whilst many families provide good quality education to children and young people, those who are finding this challenging are offered support around the following areas:

- a) Initial visits are offered to all children and young people who are registered as home educated to enable support to be offered around the expectations of home education
- b) Where visits are declined evidence of work is requested within six weeks; this is then reviewed in line with the CME statutory guidance, ensuring that the work is suitable.
- c) Formal reviews of education happen on an annual basis, although additional support can be offered within the following areas:
 - i. Support with how to provide education and what this could look like in relation to a child's needs
 - ii. If home education is a choice because needs have not been met in school and they would like to access education, help to look at options around education
 - iii. Where a school needs support to meet the needs of children and young people, the worker can engage other professionals to help meet the needs of children and young people within a school setting
 - iv. Maintained schools and academies within Leicestershire have a policy to enable reintegration back in to school if the family have not been able to provide suitable educate for their children at home.

36. The ambition for the Inclusion service in 2020 is where families are looking to home educate, to engage with them prior to the child being taken off the roll of a school. It is hoped to help families make an informed choice about their children's education.
37. To increase understanding of the support services available for parents and carers of children who have been, or are at risk of, exclusion, or have been placed in alternative provision, a website is being developed that will be incorporated within in the SEND Local Offer. This will show a pathway of support that is available through the local authority and its wider partners. This will include areas of intervention that schools can access when issues or concerns first occur, enabling schools within Leicestershire to be able to access support sooner. It is anticipated that this will be live in January 2020.

Resource Implications

38. There are currently no resource implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Pupils Missing out on Education, Ofsted 2016 -

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18825/1/Pupils%20missing%20out%20on%20education.pdf>

Forgotten Children, July 2018 Forgotten Children, July 2018 -

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/342/342.pdf>

Skipping School: Invisible Children, 2019 -

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ccoskipping-school-invisible-children-feb-2019.pdf>

DfE Statutory Guidance: Alternative Provision -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268940/alternative_provision_statutory_guidance_pdf_version.pdf

DfE Statutory Guidance: Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/1870/regulation/4/made>

Education Act 1996: The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulation 2007 –

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/1870/regulation/4/made>

Education Act 1996: Children Missing Education -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Government statistics: Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England 2016 to 2017 - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017

DfE Departmental Guidance for Local Authorities: Elective Home Education -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791527/Elective_home_education_guidance_for_LAv2.0.pdf

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s146102/Pupils%20Missing%20Education%20in%20Leicestershire%20Report%20May%202019%20draft%202.pdf>

Ofsted Home Education Study: Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exploring-moving-to-home-education-in-secondary-schools/exploring-moving-to-home-education-in-secondary-schools-research-summary>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

39. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

40. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report.

Officers to Contact

Paula Sumner
Assistant Director – Early Help and Inclusion
0116 3050546
Paula.sumner@leics.gov.uk

Alison Bradley
Head of Service - Education Quality and Inclusion
0116 3058825
Alison.Bradley@leics.gov.uk



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 21 JANUARY
2020**

LEICESTERSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Virtual School (VS) over the past 12 months and the outcomes for children in care. This report also provides a contextual summary of the VS 2019 cohort and their 2019 examination results.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The 1989 Children Act places a duty on the local authority to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, and the Children and Social Work Act 2017 extended this duty to include previously looked after children. These duties are set out in the 2018 statutory guidance “Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children”.
3. In an effort to narrow achievement gaps over time between children in care and their non-looked after peers, the local authority has a duty to:
 - promote the aspirations and educational achievement of children in care wherever they live or are educated;
 - work in partnership with all agencies to ensure appropriate education provision;
 - ensure good quality Personal Education Planning (PEP);
 - manage the Pupil Premium Plus funding for children in care;
 - monitor the results of children in care and report on them.
4. The VS discharges its duties to previously looked after children by delivering educational advice and information to schools, parents and others who the VS Head considers necessary.

Background

The role of the Leicestershire Virtual School

5. The VS has a focus on improving educational outcomes for children in care, from Early Years upwards (from the point at which the child becomes eligible for free early education, currently the start of the term following a child’s second birthday); care leavers to age 21 years (or 25 if requested) and previously looked after children up to the age of 16 years.
6. The VS supports children and young people in care and care leavers regardless of where they are living in the country and this includes all Unaccompanied Asylum-

Seeking Children (UASC). Children and young people are supported by VS team members acting as corporate parents with a specific focus on education.

7. The VS is concerned with raising self-esteem, expectations and aspirations, removing barriers to learning and working with schools, colleges and settings and other agencies to enable children and young people to receive the best support for their emotional and mental health needs and improve their educational outcomes and life chances.
8. The VS works collaboratively with a full range of stakeholders, and key to the task is the work with schools, including Head Teachers, Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships, Designated Teachers (DT) (a statutory post to support children in care in all schools) and school governors, who are vital to securing accountability for this agenda. VS training supports partners to understand the needs of looked after children and promote understanding in others, enabling them to nurture recovery and progress over time.
9. The VS does not teach the children in care, as responsibility and accountability for this rests with their schools and settings. However, the VS manages and distributes the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) funding, requiring schools to define its intended use and impact against specific Personal Education Planning (PEP) targets. This is monitored by the VS on an ongoing basis through PEP meetings and rigorous quality assurance procedures. The PEP process is overseen by the VS, ensuring a high completion rate and good quality outcomes.
10. The VS supports previously looked after children by offering advice and information about issues relating to education to schools, parents and any other person deemed relevant by the VS Head. The VS has experienced an increasing number of requests for advice and help from schools and parents and the team delivers information, advice and in-school training and signposts resources where appropriate.
11. The VS Head has contributed to the re-drafting of the Leicestershire Education, Employment and Training (EET) Strategy and has implemented an action plan focusing on ensuring looked after children and care leavers access appropriate and individualised careers advice and support to access EET.
12. In June 2019 the VS Head achieved agreement from Leicestershire County Council's People Strategy Board to continue ring-fencing County Council apprenticeships for children in care and care leavers. The apprenticeships are matched to young people who have expressed an interest in that area of work and have the relevant qualifications.

New Developments - Exclusion Review

13. In May 2019, the government published an externally-led review of exclusions practice, led by Edward Timpson CBE. It highlights variation in exclusions practice across different schools, local authorities and certain groups of children. The review makes 30 recommendations to ensure exclusions are used appropriately and the government has committed to new school accountability measures.
14. Looked after children are no more or less likely to be permanently excluded than their peers (all children). However, the report, based on data for 2016/17, finds that looked after children are the group most at risk of fixed term exclusion and are over five times

more likely than their peers (all children) to experience one or more period of fixed term exclusion.

15. There have been no permanent exclusions of Leicestershire looked after children for several years, but data for Leicestershire looked after children, whilst better than national looked after children, reflects the trend regarding fixed term exclusions.
16. A key recommendation of the Timpson Report is that school leaders should be able:

“to share practical information on behaviour management strategies, including how to develop and embed a good understanding of how underlying needs can drive behaviour”. “This should include expert training on the underlying causes of poor behaviour (including attachment, trauma and speech, language and communication needs, among others)”
17. The government response notes that:

“statutory guidance for Virtual School Heads and Designated Teachers for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children places an emphasis on whole-school awareness of the impact of trauma and attachment disorders” and they will “consider the need for further training and support on attachment and trauma as part of the Children in Need Review.”
18. The Leicestershire VS continues to provide school senior leadership, governors, Designated Teachers and other staff members with attachment and trauma awareness training and its conference in February 2020 “Preparing all learners for future success” has as its focus the exclusion of vulnerable children from school.

New Developments – 2019 Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Social Care Services

19. The recent inspection of Leicestershire Children’s Social Care Services identified that a few children attend non-registered alternative provision and determined that there is insufficient oversight of the quality of education provided in these settings. The report recognises that suitable plans in place to address this and the VS is formalising processes to gather and record evidence from commissioners of alternative provision to show they have effective ongoing quality assurance procedures in place.
20. In addition to monitoring the progress of children in alternative provision at PEPs, the VS will be seeking commissioners’ evidence of the children’s progress as supplied by the alternative provision.
21. To capture the impact of wider enrichment activity on children’s progress the VS asks for involvement in VS activities to be included on the participating children’s PEP and schools are notified of this. Participants in activities are requested to complete feedback forms which evidence the impact of the activity on them.
22. The DfE implementation grant provided to support local authorities in meeting their duties to previously looked-after children will be used to supplement the capacity of the VS to respond to rising numbers of requests for advice and information and develop and deliver relevant training to schools, adopters and prospective adopters.

2019-20 academic year – Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) funded interventions

23. The VS top-slices £400 of PPP per eligible pupil to create a pooled resource, allowing the VS to fund interim education provision where children are out of education as a result of a placement move, or a delay in accessing a school place. The pooled resource also funds participation activities that support the development of children's aspirations and self-esteem.

One to one tuition

24. The VS promotes one to one tuition as an effective means of enabling pupils to fulfil their academic potential. Supplementary tuition for primary and secondary pupils, agreed at PEP meetings, is funded through PPP, managed by the VS and allocated by the VS Head to schools.
25. The VS can arrange for tuition to be provided by tuition companies from its standing list of providers; thereafter schools are able to commission them directly. The aim is for schools to take more responsibility for sourcing the additional support required by children and to ensure it complements the work being undertaken in school.
26. Post-16 students requiring support to improve their maths and English qualifications can also be provided with tuition.

Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

27. The VS funds additional LSA support to facilitate effective transitions, academic progress and promote emotional stability in class. LSA support is agreed for a specific number of hours per week and for a specific duration, whereon it is reviewed, and new arrangements agreed if necessary.

Educational Psychologist Support

28. The VS has a contract with the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service (LEPS) to provide 52 days of dedicated Educational Psychologist work during the year. This facilitates timely access to the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process for children in care.

Participation activities

29. As corporate parents, the VS provides a range of participation opportunities that raise aspirations and promote engagement in education, in order to unlock children's potential and achieve success. These activities cover the primary, secondary and post-16 age ranges and cater for a variety of interests.
30. Children and young people have attended annual University Experience days and residential visits, giving them the opportunity to experience university life, discover the courses that are available, learning how their attendance can be supported financially and how Higher Education can enhance employment prospects.
31. Other participation events are sport- or culture-based, giving children and young people the opportunity to take part in activities that they might otherwise not experience. This includes theatre trips, author events, music workshops, sporting activities and the annual Year 11 post exam Tall Ships reward trip.
32. All the participation events are well-attended, and feedback demonstrates progress in confidence, self-esteem and attitudes to the learning experience.

33. Since July 2019, participation trips have included:
- Pedestrian Arts 5-day music workshop
 - Forest Schools
 - Alton Towers – The Big Convoy
 - Curve Theatre – Grease
 - Curve Theatre – Pizza Shop Heroes (focusing on UASC)
 - Charnwood Museum - Dastardly Dinosaurs
 - Bosworth Battlefield – Disgustarous Romans
 - Tall Ships Trust 5-day residential
 - Loughborough Museum – Day of the Dead

Book parcels

34. Monthly book parcels are sent out to children: Bookworm parcels go to children in Reception and Year 2 between November and April; Boomerang parcels go to children in Years 4 and 6 from May to October; and Letterbox book parcels go to children in Years 1, 3, 5 and 7 from May to October.
35. The VS also subscribes to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library which provides a monthly delivery of books free of charge to all children in care between 0 and 5 years.

Creative Writing Project

36. A creative writing project resulted in the publication of the “Superheroes!” book featuring 48 stories written by Leicestershire looked after children. The book was launched at an event at the Sue Townsend Theatre, Leicester on 8th October and was featured in an ITV Central News bulletin Good Morning Britain and the BBC Radio Leicester Breakfast Show. Enquiries to purchase copies of the book have come from across the UK, with one order coming from Australia.

Newsletters

37. There is now a bi-annual Virtual School and Corporate Parenting newsletter which is sent to every child in the care of Leicestershire during the autumn and summer terms. This newsletter promotes children’s involvement in educational experiences and celebrates their success.
38. The VS sends a termly Designated Teacher newsletter to all schools attended by Leicestershire children in care. This gives up-to-date information around local and national developments, events and training and provides useful advice about PEP meetings, PPP spending, children adopted from care and other issues pertinent to the role of the Designated Teacher.
39. The VS makes monthly contributions to Fostering News, Special Guardian (SGO) newsletters, adoption newsletters and the Leicestershire Governor publication for school governors.
40. The Virtual School website is updated regularly with information pertinent to schools, social workers, children and adoptive parents and special guardians.
<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-virtual-school>

Virtual School Training

Training for schools

41. The VS offers bespoke attachment, trauma and emotion coaching training packages to schools, which continue to be very well received. The VS is now developing training that targets school senior leadership teams in order to more effectively embed attachment aware practice in both primary and secondary schools in Leicestershire with the aim of reducing the number of fixed term exclusions experienced by looked after children.
42. The innovative Leicestershire VS Key Adult Learning Module project is well-embedded in the Leicestershire Designated Teacher training programme; the following is feedback on the impact of the strategies learnt from the 2018-19 course and the positive impact they have had on pupils:
 - He is now a *“happy secure child making progress with their learning. Popular with class, forging friendships with a growing range of children.”*
 - *“Anxiety levels are lower, and the child appears more contented and relaxed in the company of peers and forming better relationships with peers.”*
 - He is *“arriving at school with a positive outlook and ready to start the day. Beginning to show a greater self-worth as well as praising his peers when he recognises their achievements.”*
43. Foster carers benefit from VS training on a number of topics covering Early Years to Post-16, helping to raise educational and EET awareness, as well as helping them to develop an understanding of the barriers to learning that children in care face and giving them strategies to support.
44. Induction training for new Designated Teachers is held twice yearly, as is training for governors and social workers. Designated Teacher events promote networking opportunities and the first PEP workshop took place on 20 November 2019.
45. Evaluations of all the VS training continue to be excellent: 99% of attendees rate it as “Useful” or “Very Useful” and would recommend to others.
46. The VS offers educational awareness training to social workers, personal assistants (PAs) and foster carers, with information about provision for Early Years to Post-16. These sessions help carers to develop an understanding of the barriers to learning faced by children in care and offers strategies in support.
47. Training for social workers and personal assistants covers education issues and how to support young people to remain in or re-engage in Education, Employment or Training.

The Virtual School conference 2020

48. The Leicestershire Virtual School 2020 Conference - “Preparing all Learners for Future Success” - takes place on Thursday 27 February at the King Power Stadium, Leicester.

49. The new Ofsted framework focuses on the extent to which school *“leaders’ and managers’ high ambitions”* include *“all pupils, including those who are harder to reach”*. This conference will look at how schools’ vision, ethos and strategic direction can be shaped to provide *“high-quality education for all pupils”*.
50. The conference will target school senior leaders, governors, designated teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator’s (SENCOs) who will hear how school policies impact on the everyday experience of children, especially looked after and previously looked after children.
51. The conference will feature:
 - Jaz Ampaw-Farr, who grew up in care and is now an internationally renowned motivational speaker
 - Dave Whitaker, Director of Learning for the Wellspring Academy Trust, National Leader of Education, member of the DFE’s Timpson Exclusions Review expert reference group, founder member of the Head Teachers’ Roundtable think-tank and chair of The Difference Programme Board.
 - A panel of care-experienced young people, who will recount their experiences in education, identifying the things that supported them to achieve success.

Outcomes for Leicestershire Children in Care 2019

52. In monitoring the attendance, exclusions and the attainment and progress of children and young people, the VS obtains a unique oversight of their education which is shared with relevant partners with the aim of securing accountability for their educational outcomes, supporting and challenging partners as necessary to help the children and young people achieve their full potential.
53. Each VS Education Improvement Officer is responsible for monitoring and challenging the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of their own caseload of pupils. Higher levels of absence and exclusion than their peers are of concern and the VS is working with schools and education services to address the reasons.
54. As at the end of the academic year 2018-19, there were 378 Leicestershire children of statutory school age in care: 203 boys and 175 girls. This number has risen from 263 at the same point in 2012 (an increase of 43.7% in 6 years and an increase of 8.6% on 2017). Numbers continue to increase into 2019.
55. Compared to the general school population, a high percentage of looked after children have Special Educational Needs (SEN); 100 children (26.5%) of the Leicestershire VS cohort had Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) compared with 2.9% of their peers.
56. Of the overall cohort, 73.3% (277/378) young people were placed within Leicestershire schools and 26.7% (101/378) were placed out of county.
57. 234/277 pupils (84.5%) attending Leicestershire schools were in ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted rated schools and 87/101 pupils (86.1%) attending out of county schools were in in ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted rated schools.

Key Stage Test and Examination Results

58. References to VS children in care include pupils being educated in schools both within and beyond Leicestershire (the VS cohort) and figures are for those in care continually for at least 12 months as at 31st March 2019.
59. Test and examination results for 2019 remain provisional and will be published on confirmation of the data later in the academic year.
60. Instability, high levels of complex needs and length of time in/point of entry into care remain key factors influencing GCSE attainment at Key Stage 4. Numbers of pupils with SEND and the small numbers within cohorts also need to be taken into account when attempting comparisons with other groups.

2018/19 Headline Summary Children in Care Attainment against Key Measures – all Key Stages:

	2019
KS1 Expected Standard Reading, Writing and Maths	22.2%
KS2 Expected Standard Reading, Writing and Maths	36.8%
KS4 Attainment 8	22.48
KS4 Progress 8 - State funded schools	-1.37
KS4 Achieving a pass in English and Maths GCSEs (Grade 9-4 pass)	25.0%
KS4 Achieving a pass in English and Maths GCSEs (Grade 9-5 pass)	10.0%
KS4 English Baccalaureate Average point score	1.5

61. DfE headline measures focus on Progress 8; Attainment 8; passes at grade 4 and grade 5 or above in English and maths; EBacc entry and success and the percentage of students staying in education or employment after KS4.

All Schools	Total cohort	Good Pass English (5 or above)	Good Pass Maths (5 or above)	Good Pass Eng and Maths (5 or above)	Standard Pass English (4 or above)	Standard Pass Maths (4 or above)	Standard Pass Eng and Maths (4 or above)
Financial Year - In care for continuous 12 Months as at 31 March 2019	40	7	4	4	12	10	10
Financial Year - In care for continuous 12 Months as at 31 March 2019		17.5%	10.0%	10.0%	30.0%	25.0%	25.0%

62. For those young people who finished year 11 in academic year 2017/18, of the 37 young people who had been in care for a continuous 12 months as at 31 March 2018, 31/37 (83.8%) were still in education, employment or training at the end of the academic year.

2018/19 Attendance and exclusions

Attendance

63. Reporting is prompt and supported by the use of Welfare Call alerts. Weekly attendance and exclusion reports allied to termly Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Red / Amber / Green (RAG) reports from schools enable the VS to robustly monitor and support this agenda, responding to emerging issues and supporting pupils to maintain their attendance.
64. The VS works collaboratively with social workers, carers and schools to address individual attendance issues as they appear. Attendance increased to 92.19% in 2018-19, and the percentage of pupils with persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) increased marginally to 17.99% in 2018-19.

Exclusions

65. The VS works closely with Schools/Settings/Services to develop an understanding of looked after children's issues and appropriate strategies to address them. The VS is working with the Leicestershire Secondary and Primary Heads group to promote the attachment and trauma training to school senior leadership teams and identifying alternatives to exclusion.
66. The 2020 VS conference will target schools' senior leadership teams and address the need for individualised approaches to behaviour concerns to enable vulnerable pupils to develop and thrive in school.
67. There were no permanent exclusions of Leicestershire looked after children in 2018-2019. The overall percentage of children receiving at least one fixed term exclusion decreased from 12.32% (50 pupils) in 2017-18 to 9.58% (41 pupils) in 2018-19. Primary fixed term exclusions have fallen by 0.33% and secondary fixed term exclusions have fallen by 4.21%.

School Admission Performance Information

68. The annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator for England records the progress made by admission authorities in England in complying fully with the School Admissions Code and achieving fair access to schools for all children.
69. The latest report to the Secretary of State for Education (published 17 January 2019) covers the 2017-2018 academic year. Having warned in 2018 that some school admissions authorities... *"appear to seek to delay or discourage the admission of looked-after children who need a new school place partway through the school year"*, this year the Chief adjudicator Shan Scott added *"some of the children who can least afford to miss any part of their education are out of school for too long."*
70. In Leicestershire, the response to requests for a school place for children in care varies depending on whether the admissions arrangements for the school are administered by Leicestershire County Council Admissions team or the school.
71. Primary schools are generally responsive to applications. In 2018/19 two out of sixteen in-year applications to Leicestershire primary schools for children without an EHCP resulted in a child missing more than five days of education; one because it was a child placed for adoption and a delayed start was agreed and one was where consultation with the initial preferred school resulted in a change in the application.

72. At secondary, three out of eight in-year applications to Leicestershire secondary schools for children without an EHCP resulted in a child missing more than five days of education: two unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who were out of education for 15 and 25 school days and one was a child without a school place whose admission was delayed as the school applied to was over number and an application was submitted to another local school.
73. There are examples of good practice where schools have been prompt in their acceptance of in-year requests for school places and supported children to settle quickly in their new environment. This is usually the case where staff and senior leadership have a good understanding of attachment and trauma issues and work closely with the VS.
74. Instances of both good and poor practice are included in the Leicestershire contribution to the Annual School Adjudicator Report.

Background Papers

- Statutory guidance for local authorities:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children
- Ofsted Education inspection framework (EIF):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf
- Timpson Review of School Exclusion:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report.

Officers to Contact

Nicci Collins, Head of Service – Fostering, Adoption, CiC Service and the Virtual School
Email: nicci.collins@leics.gov.uk
Telephone number: 0116 3054504

Tony Barnard, Virtual School Head
Email: tony.barnard@leics.gov.uk
Telephone number: 0116 3056460