



Meeting: Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date/Time: Tuesday, 1 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

Location: Via Microsoft Teams

Contact: Gemma Duckworth (0116 3052583)

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Membership

Dr. P. Bremner CC	Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC	Mr T. Parton CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC	Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC	Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. C. Lewis	Mrs. M. Wright CC

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

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Appointment of Chairman.	
2. Election of Deputy Chairman.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2020.	(Pages 5 - 16)
4. Question Time.	
5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
6. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	



8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.
9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.
10. SEND Inspection and High Needs Development Plan Update. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 17 - 58)
11. SEND and Inclusion Strategy for 2020-2023. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 59 - 112)
12. Children and Family Wellbeing Service. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 113 - 128)
13. Covid-19 Recovery Update. Director of Children and Family Services and Director of Corporate Resources (Pages 129 - 136)
14. Children in Care and Permanence Report April 2019 - March 2020. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 137 - 212)
15. Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Progress Update. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 213 - 238)
16. Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2019-20. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 239 - 264)
17. Quarter 1 2020/21 Performance Report. Chief Executive and Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 265 - 274)
18. Date of next meeting.

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

19. 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?

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Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 2 June 2020.

PRESENT

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC (in the Chair)

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Mrs. C. Lewis
Mrs. R. Page CC
Mr T. Parton CC

Mrs B. Seaton 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.

76. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

77. Question Time.

The following questions, received under Standing Order 34, were put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

(A) Mrs Louise Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Accountability and conflict resolution for schools who are not following the SEND Code of Practice and not supporting children who struggle through SEND support plans. The SEND Code of Practice describes the local authority duty to have a resolution service when schools and parents disagree. What plans does the local authority have to support listening to parents and supporting them with conflict resolution and holding schools accountable?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The local authority recognises the paramount importance of supporting children with additional needs as early as possible. Most children with SEND can progress well in school without the need for an Education Health and Care Plan. On a day to day basis the vast majority of matters between parents and schools are resolved amicably through formal and informal meetings and discussions in school, without the need for the local authority to be involved. Where parents need additional information, advice or support, Leicestershire commissions and provides a well-established local SENDIAS Service, who undertake a wide range of activity to support parents/carers of children with special needs, at every stage. The following website contains detailed information about how they can support parents who are concerned about their child at 'SEND Support'. The

website contains some very accessible and information You Tube videos:
<https://sendiassleicester.org.uk/>

Supplementary Question

Mrs Engels asked a supplementary question to identify what support the local authority gave to parents to resolve disagreements for all children and young people with SEND, not only those with EHC Plans, in particular how SEN duties are carried out by the local authority or education setting, the SEND provision made by an educational setting, and health or social care provision in relation to EHC needs assessments. Mrs Engels also stated that Chapter 11 of the SEND Code of Practice includes the local authorities duties to arrange Disagreement Resolution services, which are in addition to support and advice from SENDIASS and ECHP mediation. Mrs Engels asked if the local authority has decided not to provide a disagreement resolution service, what can parents do when schools are not accountable through their own complaints processes, and to prevent the need for EHCP appeals and formal complaints to the Ombudsman?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the local authority commissioned SENDIASS to support families where there was a disagreement. If there was an issue between a school and a parent for a child with an EHCP, the SENA Service undertook informal meetings with parents/carers to try to reach a resolution – this was a duty under the Code of Practice. If the local authority was commissioning a placement or SENDIASS services and parents displayed concerns, it was also the duty of the local authority to look into this in more detail. Whilst there wasn't a formal local authority Disagreement Resolution Service, processes were in place to resolve any disagreements, including social care and early help. In terms of SEND support, the new Inclusion Service would support parents and settings in best identifying how children's needs could be met. In addition, the local authority commissioned Global to undertake formal mediation, but before moving into the formal process, there were opportunities for informal disagreement resolution to take place. Parents were signposted to this and when the SENA Service corresponded with them, the local authority could give more information to parents about this. If there was a disagreement about any decisions made, particularly by parents, the SENA Service and other partners would endeavour to meet informally before moving into formal mediation and this could include where, for example, a decision had been made not to assess for an EHCP when a child was receiving SEND support.

In relation to Chapter 11, the SENA Service endeavoured to resolve all issues, informally in the first instance, and to reduce the need for complaints. The local authority used Global, who were available to resolve disagreements as well as offering a more formal mediation service.

(B) Mrs Louise Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Despite repeat offers to work with the inclusion team on the Not Fine in School Framework, we have still not been consulted. There seems to be a common assumption that the main cause of school refusal and attendance difficulties is parenting and therefore using early help as a solution. However, evidence suggests a major contributor is SEND, physical and mental health needs not being met. The impact of not addressing this and the need to early support is that children deteriorate and the cost of supporting them increases. Could the local authority confirm where it is with its work on this and if

and when Not Fine in School, and perhaps other relevant parental support groups, will be consulted?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The Inclusion Service functions were developed internally and reconfigured in October 2019. Workshops were held between November 2018 and January 2019, a number of groups were invited to attend these workshops, including Not Fine in School. Utilising the results of the workshops, the Inclusion Service now brings together a range of support functions that include: Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education, Pupils Missing Education, Risk of Exclusion, Children with Medical Needs and SEND Support. The team offers a range of support to schools and parents to support the delivery of services and supports pathways to wider services should they be needed. The local authority works closely with parent and carer support groups in the development and review of services and is more than happy to include Not Fine in School in these consultations.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Engels asked a supplementary question to confirm if and when a representative of Not Fine in School will be invited to future co-production events.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the department had held workshops between November 2018 and January 2019 and had invited a number of groups to attend these, including Not Fine in School. The local authority was committed to working closely with parent and carer support groups in reviewing and developing services and would be happy to include Not Fine in School in consultations.

(C) Mrs Louise Engels asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Following from emergency changes in educational provision due to Covid-19 and the need to find flexible alternatives, could the local authority address parent's concerns and consider the continuation of remote and flexible learning for children who are unable or struggling to attend school?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The emergency changes in special educational needs provision are in place for a finite period as a result of Covid-19. In terms of the consideration of remote and flexible learning for children who are unable or struggling to attend school, this would need to be considered as part of an assessment of a child's needs in order to develop the best possible solution to enable a child to access education to meet their assessed needs.

(D) Mrs Sue Whiting asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Could the Chair please state if the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2020-2023, published in April 2020, is in response to the letter from Ofsted/CQC dated 27 March 2020 "a Written Statement of Action is required because of significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice" and will the many families affected be receiving a public apology?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The Children and Families Departmental Plan sets out the priorities for the Department for the next three years. Following the publication of the SEND Inspection of the Local Area on 14 May, the local area is required to submit a Written Statement of Action, within 70 days, to address the areas of concern identified in the report.

The Department is committed to learning and improving its services and will ensure that it addresses the areas of weakness identified – but it's important to stress that the main findings of the report also identified a great many strengths, such as the way partners work together to identify and meet the needs of children and their families, the value parents put on the county's specialist educational units and special schools, and the range of health and leisure services available to young people with SEND. If any parent has any concerns arising, the department would encourage them to make contact so that it can consider the issues raised.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Whiting asked a supplementary question querying whether another document would need to be published for Ofsted/CQC specifically addressing the "significant weaknesses" or whether the many families impacted by the negative findings of the Ofsted/CQC report would receive a public apology. Mrs Whiting asked whether confirmation could be given that the Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2020-2023 addressed all the "significant weaknesses" identified by Ofsted/CQC or would another document be required to be published before the end of July? Mrs Whiting also asked for confirmation that, given the "great many strengths" identified in the Ofsted/CQC report plus the vision, mission and values contained in the Children and Families Departmental Plan that the many families impacted by the negative findings of the Ofsted/CQC report would receive a public apology?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that a separate document was required to be produced as a result of the inspection. Following the inspection in February and subsequent publication of the report in May, the department was required to produce a Written Statement of Action based on the significant weaknesses that were found during the inspection. The response would be as a local area, including the Clinical Commissioning Groups and other partners, and this needed to be produced and submitted to Ofsted and the CQC within 70 days from the date of the publication of the report. As a result, this would not be published before the end of July. There was a longer period that allowed the local area to produce the Written Statement of Action and ensure that it was co-produced with parents/carers and children and young people across Leicestershire.

In relation to a public apology, the department would consider any written representations and if appropriate, in individual cases, the department would offer an apology as was the usual practice.

(E) Mrs Gillian Bowers asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

In relation to the Draft Children and Family Departmental Plan and the Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership Plan, how is it envisaged that these plans will need to

change to incorporate significant recommendations from the recent joint CQC/Ofsted inspection which were included in their letter dated 27 March 2020?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The Children and Family Departmental Plan sets out the priorities for the Department for the next three years. Following the publication of the SEND Inspection of the Local Area on 14 May, it was the local area that was required to submit a Written Statement of Action, within 70 days, to address the areas of concerns identified in the report.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Bowers asked a supplementary question to identify on what date would the Written Statement of Action be issued, who would it be issued to, and how would it be shared with parents/carers?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the Written Statement of Action was due to be submitted to Ofsted and the CQC within 70 days of the report being published – this was a nationally set timescale. Due to Covid-19, the date had been extended and the local authority was currently awaiting the final submission date from Ofsted. In terms of how it would be shared with parents and carers, the report would be published on the Ofsted and CQC website and also on the Local Offer. However, the Written Statement of Action would be co-produced with parents and carers of children with SEND and other stakeholders; parents and carers would therefore be involved in its development and would have sight of the document prior to it being published.

(F) Mrs Gillian Bowers asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Has a process already been established for incorporating these previously mentioned significant recommendations and if so, has this been published and shared so that all relevant groups including parents and carers are kept informed?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The department was currently developing plans to produce the Written Statement of Action to address these concerns. This Written Statement of Action would be co-produced with parents and carers and children with Special Needs and disabilities to ensure it fully reflected their views and wishes.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Bowers asked a supplementary question to identify when were the co-production meetings with parents/carers and how the department would ensure fair representation of as wide a range of needs and disabilities as Ofsted/CQC did in their inspection? Mrs Bowers also sought clarification of how many children the department would collate information from and what would be the mechanism for this which would enable as wide a range of needs and disabilities to be included?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the department was currently working through the best way to hold consultation sessions as there were currently greater restrictions due to Covid-19.

Ordinarily, the intention would be to bring people together to have face to face conversations but this would not be possible for the foreseeable future. The SEND and Inclusion Board, on which parents and carers were represented, was currently looking at the best possible way to consult with parents/carers, children and young people and other stakeholders. This work had already commenced and would continue over the summer. The department was fully committed to ensuring that the sessions were fully inclusive and also that there was a good representation of people from across Leicestershire.

There was no definite answer as to how many children the department collated information from; it was the aim to have as wide a range of children as possible so there would be no limit to the number of children engaged with. There were a number of forums through which the department worked in terms of engaging children and young people, including through schools and education settings, and the department also engaged with a number of parent and carer representation groups. There would also be more public, wider consultation.

(G) Mrs Gillian Bowers asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

In relation to the Draft Children and Families Departmental Plan, various groups were consulted but no such consultation had taken place with the Leicestershire Adopters and Foster Carer's Support, the only group representing the needs of all care experienced children and their parents/carers in Leicestershire. This was the same for the Children and Families Partnership Plan. The group had a track record of working well and in a constructive manner with other departments within the local authority including the Permanence Team. Could reassurance be sought that this would be rectified as the plans move forward from draft to final copy?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The Children and Family Service actively seeks feedback from children, young people and families across Leicestershire as part of direct work undertaken with families, through specific engagement activity and through forums including the Children's Youth Council for Leicestershire (CYCLE), Children in Care Council and the SEND Parent Carer Forum and this feedback has been considered as part of the development of the Plan. The Plan has also been shaped by key themes emerging from the Make Your Mark 2019 National Youth Ballot in which over nine thousand young people from across Leicestershire voted on the issues most important to them. The Plan has also been shaped by feedback from a range of organisations through the work taken place across the department over the past year, this will include the input from Leicestershire Adopters and Foster Carer's Support through their involvement with teams across the department as set out in the question.

Supplementary Questions

Mrs Bowers asked a supplementary question to the effect that Leicestershire Adopters and Foster Carer's Support Group had not had any involvement in feedback or co-production of the Plans. As the only group in Leicestershire which represented all care-experienced children and their families, would a representative from LAFS be invited to co-production meetings and events in future to ensure that this key group of vulnerable children/young people and their families were represented fully and their views incorporated into future planning?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services replied to the effect that the department would welcome the involvement of the Leicestershire Adopters and Foster Carer's Support Group. There had been a delay in contact due to Covid-19, but two Service Managers would now lead on seeking contact through all Leicestershire adopter and foster carer groups, and it was acknowledged that LAFS already had a well-established relationship with the service areas of fostering and adoption.

78. 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).

79. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

80. 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.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

82. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

83. Draft Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2020/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which presented the draft Leicestershire Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2020-2023. The new Departmental Plan set out the vision and ambition for its services and the department had identified four ambitions and associated priority actions to contribute towards improving outcomes for children, young people and families in Leicestershire. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) A wide range of consultation had taken place in order to develop the Plan; much of this had been based on how the department sought direct feedback from the children, young people and families with whom the service worked, but it was also through specific engagement activity through a number of forums, for example the Youth Council for Leicestershire, Children in Care Council, Supporting People After Care Council and the SEND Parent Carer Forum – the view of these had been considered as part of the development of the Plan.

The Plan had also been shaped by the key themes arising from the Make Your Mark Campaign, which was a national youth ballot of issues that were most important to young people.

- (ii) In response to a query, both positive and negative feedback from children, young people, parents and carers had been used to directly inform the Plan and examples of this had been included throughout the document. The department had seen the feedback as a positive tool.
- (iii) It was noted that the key priorities in the previous Departmental Plan had remained as ambitions in the new Plan. There was more of a focus through the inclusion of a set of priorities for each of the ambitions and these had been developed based on what was known about the children and families in Leicestershire. There had been no significant changes although the separate policy around children's emotional mental health and wellbeing had been removed and this issue had been incorporated into all the ambitions of the new Plan.
- (iv) In relation to performance figures, it would be possible to compare these to what had previously been achieved. The document set out what it was hoped would be achieved through the delivery of the Plan but further work would take place around the section on impact and outcomes to give more context to what was being achieved. The department produced, on a quarterly basis, its performance report and this would include the outcomes that would be achieved. This would also include numbers and percentages, regional comparisons and quartile performance.
- (v) In line with the impact of Covid-19 on the department and children and families, the department was currently looking at how it would step up services and what would be different or additional to previously. As a result, the Departmental Plan would be reviewed and should it be necessary, additional priorities would be added. It was likely that the priorities would need to be revisited in the light of the planned review of the MTFS and Strategic Plan.

The Committee acknowledged that there were a few amendments to be made to the draft Plan prior to its publication, but agreed that it was a very clear document.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

84. Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership Plan 2018/21: Progress Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an update on progress of the Children and Families Partnership Plan 2018-21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) In response to a query, it was stated that Mr Ould CC chaired the Partnership. There were five priority areas in the Plan and each was led by a senior officer of the Partnership. The Partnership involved a wide range of agencies and this reflected the breadth of services available for children and families. Agencies

were very committed to the Partnership and working together and the priority leads also undertook work through a series of sub-groups. Mr Ould CC reiterated that this was a critical group for the future of children and families, and he undertook regular meetings with the priority leads, the majority of which had worked very well and had pulled everyone together. The Partnership was dynamic and provided a vehicle to harmonise services for the benefit of children and families.

- (ii) A member raised the fact that knife crime was a priority and sought assurance that the protection of young people against substance misuse was not lost. It was stated that the Partnership had previously received a presentation from CYCLe around knife crime and this had demonstrated how big an issue this was for young people. Also linked into this was work around County Lines, the inclusion programme for schools and work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Public Health. The Director of Children and Family Services confirmed that the priorities which had been set by the Partnership had been influenced by the views of young people. Knife crime remained one of the key issues for young people across the county but reassurance was given that the issues surrounding substance misuse were a critical issue for the Partnership. It was also important to note that the Plan did not provide a detailed description of all the work that was being undertaken.

- (iii) It was noted that Knife Angel, which had been due to visit Leicestershire in May, had now been postponed until May 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

85. Children in Need of Help and Protection.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an overview of the work in the department relating to children within Leicestershire who required help and protection, and a summary of the local authority's performance in relation to this cohort of Leicestershire's most vulnerable children. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) There had been an initial reduction in contacts at the front door during Covid-19, but this was now back to the usual rate. There had been good performance at the front door in relation to the number of assessments completed and timeliness. This was a measure working on a basis that it was right and proper that the assessed needs of children were identified as soon as possible and could put in place the appropriate measures. Front door performance was measured against statistical neighbours and high performing authorities.
- (ii) Since 2017, the recruitment and retention turnover rate had improved and the vacancy rate had decreased. There had been difficulties recruiting permanent staff in some localities and a commitment had therefore been made to employ agency staff whilst the posts were recruited to. The department had been awarded some growth monies to enable to recruit to some additional social worker posts and whilst these were being recruited to, agency staff would

cover the posts. However, reassurance was given that the number of permanent posts had increased significantly.

- (iii) The re-referral rate was constantly monitored and there had recently been an increase. Concern was raised by a member around the re-referral rate to ensure that children were not being referred on numerous occasions due to the fact that their needs had not been appropriately assessed. Reassurance was given that the re-referral rate was not necessarily that the case had been referred to the front door and no further action had been taken. This would include any child who had had involvement from the service at any point. It was possible that the child had been involved with the service, this had ended and they were then referred back at a later stage. This was not because the assessment had not worked as it had been hoped. This was an area that was monitored closely and audit work was taking place to understand and address the recent increase in re-referrals. It was agreed that the results from the audit would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That a further report, arising from the audit work being undertaken, be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

86. Leicestershire's Response to Tackling Child Criminal Exploitation.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an overview of the work and progress of the Child Criminal Exploitation, Missing and Trafficked Hub. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- (i) A query was raised as to whether Covid-19 had had any impact on County Lines activity. In relation to current activity, the service had seen a reduction in missing episodes for the most prolific young people who went missing. There was evidence to suggest that young people had been more frightened during the period. An enforcement was planned within the next two weeks where Leicestershire County Council would be supporting Leicestershire Police in identifying any safeguarding issues for the properties where the Police would be executing warrants. The Force Intelligence Bureau still continued to look at intelligence and meetings were taking place to discuss the current picture as it was possible that County Lines activity was more undercover than usual.
- (ii) A member sought assurance that Leicestershire Police had co-operation with neighbouring forces, such as Derbyshire and Staffordshire, due to concern that drugs could come into the county from other areas. There was a regional response to criminal exploitation; Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire Police were represented regionally and it was the intention to develop a resource which echoed what Leicestershire did – if a young person crossed into Leicestershire, a package was developed that travelled with the young person wherever they moved to. Leicestershire Police had a number of links with the Metropolitan Police in respect of County Lines coming from London,

and the Force Intelligence Bureau continued to develop links with other authorities.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

87. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 1 September 2020 at 2.00pm.

88. Mr. I. D. Ould OBE CC.

This was to be Mr Ould's last meeting as Lead Member for Children and Family Services. Mr Ould said that he had enjoyed his time in this position and he wished the department well. The Committee thanked Mr Ould for his contribution and all the work he had undertaken.

2.00 – 3.42pm
02 June 2020

CHAIRMAN

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

**SEND INSPECTION AND HIGH NEEDS DEVELOPMENT PLAN
UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report of the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support along with an overview of the plans to continuously develop and improve services to support children and families who are experiencing SEND through the High Needs Development transformation programme.
2. Following the inspection, the views of the Committee are also sought on the local area Written Statement of Action that has been co-produced with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), parents, carers, children and young people and other stakeholders. This is due to be submitted to Ofsted by 7 October 2020.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The 0 – 25 SEND Code of Practice (2015) is the statutory guidance that sets out how local authorities (education and social services) and other organisations such as health services must work together to support children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.
4. In December 2018 the Cabinet authorised a consultation on the High Needs Block Development Plan including the proposed development of enhanced and expanded SEND provision across the County.
5. In October 2019 the Cabinet was advised of the progress of the High Needs Development Plan and on 5 November 2019 a report was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee summarising the national and local context relating to SEND along with an overview of the plans to continuously develop and improve services to support children and families who are experiencing SEND.
6. On 21 January 2020, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the Ofsted SEND

Inspection Framework, outlining also that an inspection of local area SEND services was anticipated 'in the near future'. Assurance was given that the Committee would be informed of the outcome following the publication of the inspection report.

Background

7. Ofsted and the CQC conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Leicestershire between 3 and 7 February 2020 to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
8. On 15 May 2020 the inspection report for Leicestershire was published and as a result of the findings, and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) had determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) is required because of two significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice. The local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted.

The areas of weakness outlined in the report are:

- The absence of a clearly defined joint commissioning strategy for 0–25 SEND provision.
 - Systemic weaknesses in the quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans including the drawing up of these plans; the inaccuracy with which the plans reflect children and young people's needs; the absence of good-quality outcomes in EHC plans; the inconsistency with which plans include contributions from education and particularly health and care professionals; and the lack of any formal quality assurance framework to improve new and existing plans.
9. The report is a fair assessment of the strengths of the support and services for children, young people and their families with SEND in Leicestershire. As well as the areas for development highlighted along with the key issues for concern, there were many strengths also stated clearly in the report, concurring with the views of the Local Area, as stated in the Self Evaluation document that was shared with the inspection team prior to the inspection visit.
 10. Amongst many others, the following areas were identified as strengths:
 - Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in Leicestershire's SEND arrangements.
 - Providers work collaboratively to support children and young people with SEND. The local authority, Special Schools and the Teaching Schools Alliance offer valuable support to professionals.
 - Early years provision for children in Leicestershire is strong with well-established working relationships across services to identify the needs of children and families. This approach supports good information sharing and a co-ordinated approach for children with SEND.

- Inspectors recognise the Local Area is taking action to improve but the SEND landscape requires joint responsibility. Plans to address this were recognised but the full impact is not yet evident.
11. Other areas for development highlighted, include:
- There are children and young people who are waiting too long for neurodevelopment assessments to identify autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
 - Some parents are exasperated with the systems for identifying and assessing their children's needs. They find that access to some services is complex and difficult to navigate.
12. The full report can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/5/15/Leicestershire-County-Council-Final-Inspection-Report.pdf>

The Written Statement of Action

13. The publication of the inspection report was delayed due to Covid-19. It was expected to be received in late March, however, was published on 15 May 2020. It is usual for local areas to submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) within 70 days, however a request for this to be extended due to the challenges of managing the impact of school closures as a result of the national lockdown during the peak of the Coronavirus pandemic was granted. The request was for a 30-day extension and this was granted, requiring the WSOA to be submitted by 7 October 2020.
14. In preparation for the submission of the WSOA to Ofsted by the agreed revised deadline of 7 October, a number of meetings and formal discussions have been held since the publication of the report in mid-May.
15. Throughout the school summer holiday period, a further schedule of proposed meetings and workshops are planned, some of which will involve stakeholders, including parents, carers, children and young people. These partnership meetings will also be supported by a shared collaborative space which will be accessible to the key working group members so that input into the plan can be ongoing.
16. Additionally, parents, carers, children and young people will also be providing feedback through surveys and questionnaires to supplement the meetings; this is not just to widen participation but is also necessary due to the time of year (school summer holidays) and because of the limitations to direct contact through the Coronavirus pandemic where home working and social distancing are still required.
17. The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) will be the main conduit for co-production with the wider parent body. However, SEND Alliance representatives are also invited to enable their views and suggestions to be considered for inclusion in the Written Statement of Action. The local SEND Alliance is a group of parents

from Leicestershire who have united as a support group, to advise and guide one another, as well as to campaign for better support for children and young people with additional needs. Children and young people directly involved in the co-production of the document (and subsequent monitoring of the action plan) includes representatives from the Autism Youth Council as well as many of those who met with the inspectors in February 2020 from across a wide range of ages and needs.

18. Engagement of schools and other partners will be made possible through creative and imaginative means of communication during the school summer holidays and the current social distancing/home-working guidance. The Local Offer inspection pages will also be regularly updated to highlight progress and to encourage wider engagement and awareness.
19. Elected Members will also be regularly briefed, and fortnightly meetings will be held with the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England to monitor and oversee progress of the development of the Written Statement of Action. The governance of the key partners within the local area (local authority, CCG, Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) and the PCF) will approve and sign off the final document prior to submission.
20. A draft template of the WSOA has been circulated to partners and stakeholders and all have agreed that the following sections will be developed for each of the priorities in the action plan:
 - **Area of Focus**
 - Key tasks that need to be completed
 - **Actions to implement**
 - Activities and actions required to drive completion of the tasks
 - **Lead**
 - Officer responsible for monitoring the actions
 - **Evidence**
 - How we will know that the action is making a positive difference
 - **Impact Measures**
 - Qualitative and quantitative information and data that will be used to check progress
 - **Completion Date**
 - When the action will be fully in place
21. Progress will be recorded on a RAGB scale with 'Red – Delayed', 'Amber – In progress', 'Green – On Track' and 'Blue – Completed'. The Written Statement of Action will also include links in appendices to the SEND and Inclusion Strategy as well as the High Needs Block Development Plan which will demonstrate the golden threads of improvement across these strategic documents and detail the additional improvement strands being addressed through their action plans.
22. The Written Statement of Action document will also highlight key performance indicators that will be used to measure and monitor progress against the intended improvements and the impact of the plan. There will also be a clear governance structure included to demonstrate ongoing leadership and oversight as well as the challenge and support to the local area partners involved in undertaking the identified actions to address the required improvements. This

will be through the SEND and Inclusion Board, with regular reports also to DMT and Lead Member. The draft WSOA is attached at Appendix A.

23. The local area is confident that the Written Statement of Action will be effectively and collaboratively co-produced and will provide a solid foundation for ongoing monitoring of progress.
24. Some key actions have already been completed, including:
 - Multi-agency panel meetings are in place to consider decisions to assess for an EHC plan, decisions to issue a plan and placements in specialist provisions including with Independent Providers where this is considered the most appropriate option.
 - A Quality Assurance Framework has been agreed and will be fully implemented in September 2020, with a rigorous audit and moderation process for Education, Health and Care Plans to improve quality and consistency.
 - A Joint Solutions Panel is now in place to consider complex cases requiring tripartite funding
 - Outcomes Training – helping colleagues providing advice for the EHC plans and drafting plans include specific and smart targets so that the desired outcomes can be easily measured.
 - Agreement for investment in a new IT case management system that will enable better management oversight in terms of the timeliness of issuing plans as well as their quality. This is currently being procured and will be developed with the supplier alongside the service to ensure a bespoke product for Leicestershire.
25. Other actions are also nearing completion or currently underway:
 - Agreement to a revised Education, Health and Care Plan template agreement in order to improve the quality of plans
 - Audit and Moderation guidance issued, and training scheduled for August 2020
 - Joint Partnership Agreement sign off to clarify the role, and engagement of the Parent Carer Forum
 - Neurodevelopmental (ND) Pathway processes for assessment and possible diagnosis of Autism or other neuro atypical conditions led by health partners through a partnership steering group. This has been slow to progress however the steering group to drive this action is now meeting regularly with better monitoring and oversight to ensure that this is now gaining traction.
 - Preferred provider for new IT system identified and procurement process commenced
26. The Written Statement of Action will be either approved by Ofsted following its initial submission or will be returned to the local area with a further 20 days

granted for a revised version to be prepared if the first iteration is not of the required standard. Fortnightly meetings, led by the regional DfE lead to ensure that the local area is 'on track', is reporting that excellent progress is being made towards completion of a robust plan.

27. The inspection and subsequent report clearly highlighted that the key issues and areas for development are already being addressed through the High Needs Block programme which has made progress towards improving services and support for children and young people with SEND although there is still much more to do to ensure the right support is in place at the right time for all children and young people with SEND.

High Needs Block Development progress

28. As a result of the challenges faced by local areas in implementing the 2014 SEND reforms and the consequent financial pressures, a robust High Needs Development (HND) Programme was agreed by the Cabinet in October 2018 and significant progress has since been made, with further work to do over the next two years to sustain improvements. An update report was provided in the Autumn of 2019.
29. As well as addressing the pressures on the High Needs Block budget, the plan has been developed following extensive diagnostic analysis by the Transformation Unit, to review and redesign systems and processes alongside the Special Educational Needs Assessment (SENA) Team to build on good practice and to develop a continuum of support for children and young people with special education needs, from school based support through to more intensive, low incidence, high cost provision.
30. The programme focuses on a system wide approach and is implementing activities across a wide range of teams through piloting and then embedding if proven to be effective in improving services and support for children and young people. The programme is constantly examining best practice from elsewhere and analysing existing service data to look for further opportunities and currently consists of activity such as:
 - **Developing a wider inclusion offer** – focusing on early intervention and prevention, the programme has delivered products which provides schools and settings with the tools to provide good SEN support so as to ensure children's needs are met earlier and in mainstream settings where this is possible and appropriate.
 - **Continuous Improvement in SENA** - the programme focuses on a series of understanding, measuring and reviewing processes, introducing better management information and embedding improvement cycles in management meetings, the aim is to better understand demand to improve consistency across the local area.
31. Significant progress is reported, such as:

Requests to Assess

- A SENA/SEN Review (inclusion) step across process is agreed for roll out on 3 August (providing families with a support caseworker from the outset of the process)

Consistency of Decision-Making

- SEN officers are now referring requests for assessment to panel for decisions ensuring consistency across areas
- Following initial feedback, panels are now being conducted more effectively

EHC plan development

- An action plan has been developed to review the personal budget policy and process, including opportunities for co-production
- A Quality Assurance and Learning Framework is planned to be implemented in September 2020 that will include a cycle of regular audits and monitoring of EHC plans to drive up quality and consistency

Annual Reviews

- The backlog of outstanding annual reviews is being addressed by dedicated officers
- A process flow diagram and identifying best practice guidelines document is in development

Data and Dashboards

- Interim dashboards have been agreed and are in place
- Tableau dashboards have been agreed and are being developed

Communications

- A Communications plan has been agreed
- A fortnightly newsletter for the SEN Assessment team is up and running, with positive staff engagement providing regular content for the updates

32. The comprehensive communications plan ensures that each activity is well communicated with schools and partners.
33. The extensive programme for change is underpinned by robust governance and is overseen by a Programme Board, chaired by the Assistant Director for Education and SEND, with regular reports presented to the Children and Families Departmental Management Team.
34. The programme has made good progress and to date, many of the planned new provision has been delivered to target dates. However, there has been some delay to the building programme for the two new schools as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and temporary provisions are having to be rapidly delivered over a very short period of time to ensure all children and young people expecting

to transfer into one of the new schools have an appropriate school place that can meet their needs at the start of the Autumn Term 2020.

35. The programme has had two notable successes in the last three months:
- The programme plan has been re-baselined and apart from some delays to the capital build programme, delivery timescales have not been negatively impacted by Covid-19.
 - There is now greater traction and focus from the service areas in delivering the actions required to improve the quality and consistency of SEN provision. A significant range of practice and system changes will be delivered in the next six months.

Consultation

36. Although there is no requirement for statutory consultation with the development of the Written Statement of Action, there is a requirement for the plan to be co-produced by the local authority and CCG through engagement with stakeholders for example schools, parents, carers, children and young people.
37. Any views of the Committee on the Written Statement of Action will be considered and fed into the final document.

Resource Implications

38. The Written Statement of Action is being co-produced by the local authority, the CCG, LPT and PCF and co-ordinated by fixed term appointment of a local authority officer (SEND Development Specialist), funded through the budget agreed for the delivery of High Needs Development programme. The actions proposed to deliver the improvements identified in the SEND inspection report are inextricably linked with the intended outcomes of the High Needs Development Programme and therefore it is entirely appropriate that there is a tangible link across the two activities.

Timetable for Decisions

39. The Committee is asked to provide any feedback to the Written Statement of Action by 11 September 2020 so that any requested amendments or inclusions can be actioned in time for final sign-off by the SEND and Inclusion Board at the extraordinary meeting scheduled for 22 September.
40. The CCG, LPT and PCF will also sign off the Written Statement of Action at this Board meeting, having taken the document through their senior management and governance.

Conclusions

41. The Committee is requested to consider the partnership Written Statement of Action document and to provide any feedback, suggested amendments or input by 11 September 2020.
42. The Committee is asked to note the update on the HNB development programme.

Background Papers

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Provision – High Needs Block Development Plan (Cabinet, 18 December 2018) -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s143211/SEND%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Funding – Latest Funding Position (High Needs Block) and Development of New Provision (Cabinet, 22 October 2019) -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s148882/SEND%20Funding%20HNB%20and%20New%20Provision%20final.pdf>

Overview of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Improvements (Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5 November 2019) -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s149165/SEND%20v2.pdf>

Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 21 January 2020) -

http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s150494/CFS%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20-%20SEND%20INPSECTION_final.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

43. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Written Statement of Action, Leicestershire County Council, 2020 (Draft)

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

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

45. Any proposed actions within the Written Statement of Action or High Needs Block Development Plan will impact positively on Children, Young People and their families where there are additional SEND needs.

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Leicestershire SEND





Joint area SEND inspection in Leicestershire

Written Statement of Action

Between 3 February and 7 February 2020, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Leicestershire to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

On the 15th May 2020 the inspection report for Leicestershire was published and as a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) is required because of two significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice. The local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted.

These areas of weakness are:

- The absence of a clearly defined joint commissioning strategy for 0–25 SEND provision
- Systemic weaknesses in the quality of EHC plans, including: the drawing up of EHC plans; the inaccuracy with which the plans reflect children and young people's needs; the absence of good-quality outcomes in EHC plans; the inconsistency with which plans include contributions from education and particularly health and care professionals; the lack of any formal quality assurance framework to improve new and existing plans.

The Local Area is committed to improving support, services and provision for children, young adults, parents and carers in Leicestershire. We are committed to working in partnership, increasing co-production, and harnessing the expertise within the system; including parents, carers, children, young adults and the staff who work to support them. We are committed to ensuring that the parents, carers and the children and young adults with SEND themselves are directly and transparently involved in co-

producing the services that support them; so that that they receive high quality education, care and health provision. We will work across our wider partnership to understand experiences, improve services, and to secure the trust of families. Senior leaders in Leicestershire will prioritise the delivery of the actions outlined within this statement of action and will ensure robust scrutiny of progress resulting in improved services and making the best use of the resources available for SEND.

SECTION 1 – Introduction

‘Our vision in Leicestershire for children with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – for them to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives’.

In May 2020 a revised version of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy, in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, West Leicestershire and East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups was agreed by the SEND and Inclusion Board, subject to final sign-off through the governance of the CCG and the Local Authority. The launch of the new strategy coincided with a time of unprecedented challenge for all services, compounded by the recent Coronavirus pandemic. Leicestershire was inspected by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, and although the good work taking place across services and between services and parents and carers was recognised, the inspection has provided some actions that urgently need to be addressed.

Crucial to the success of the SEND and Inclusion strategy in Leicestershire, is the important role parent and carers have in shaping the experience for their children and young people. The SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board across Leicestershire is committed to working with parents and carers and communities to raise aspirations and build resilience.

The strategy, in continuing to outline Leicestershire’s response to these reforms, is also designed to reiterate the Local Area’s continuing commitment to high quality services. The 2020 Ofsted / CQC Inspection of SEND in Leicestershire highlighted many strengths of the Local Area and identified areas where improvements have been made as well as areas that still need to be developed. There was also a recognition that since 2016, there has been a determined effort to implement the disability and special educational needs reforms effectively. It was also acknowledged in the report that Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in Leicestershire’s SEND arrangements and that they are aware of the deficiencies in SEND provision for children and young people.

A significant investment for Leicestershire County Council, is the High Needs Block (HNB) development programme, which aims to transform the SEND system to ensure a better experience for Children, Young People and Families with SEND as well as more efficient use of resources. This programme provides a platform for improvement, linked to the SEND and Inclusion Strategy. Many

of the areas for development that the inspectors highlighted in the Ofsted report were already being addressed through the HNB workstream activity and were outlined in the local area self-assessment provided to Ofsted prior to the inspection.

SECTION 2 – EHC plan data

There are approximately 209,231 Children and Young People (CYP) aged 0-25 years that live in Leicestershire (Office of National Statistics estimates for 2017). This is 30.3% of the total population of the area. There are 105,436 children and young people educated in schools funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant (aged 3-18). The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) shows that 13% of children in Leicestershire are living with families that are income deprived. The highest proportion of children living in poverty live in the Charnwood area of the county. CYP from minority ethnic groups account for 12% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed. The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 11,086 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 3,801 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 14.1% of the Leicestershire school population.

National SEN2

The national SEN2 data collection includes all children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan that are the financial responsibility of Leicestershire. This will include all children and young people that are educated within Leicestershire schools and in other schools outside of Leicestershire, including independent schools and non-maintained special schools.

National SEN2 KPI	Leicestershire			Regional	National
Total number of EHC plans - (as of January 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	% change	% change
	4751	4222	12.5%	9.5%	10.2%
New EHC plans issued during calendar year – (as of January 2020)	Calendar year 2019	Previous year	% change	% change	% change
	760	635	19.7%	7.1%	10.2%
New plans as a proportion of all plans – (as of January 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	Base year 2020	Base year 2020
	16%	15%	+1%	13.7%	13.8%

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New EHC plans issued within 20 weeks – including exclusions (as of January 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	Base year 2020	Base year 2020
	92%	98.1%	- 6.2%	67.8%	58.7%

The national information is used to monitor Leicestershire against the regional and national performance and provides the authority with insight into areas for further investigation at a local level. The latest information from 2019 shows that Leicestershire continues to see a higher rate of total number of EHCP's than the region and national. The latest local data for August 2020 shows that there is a total of 5,039 active EHCP's. The largest age bandings for the total number of EHCP's continues to be for 5-15 year olds and with the largest increase in EHCP's from August 2017 to August 2020 being in the 20-25 age group with a 90% increase. The number of new EHCP's issued throughout 2019 was 790. This is a 19.7% increase on the previous year and is well above both regional and national figures. At the beginning of August 2020, Leicestershire had issued 446 new EHCP's from 1st January which is slightly above the 419 new EHCP's that had been issued the previous year. New EHC plans as a proportion of the total number of EHCP's continues to increase and the proportion for Leicestershire is higher than for both regional and national. As a result of the increasing workload for services contributing to the EHCP statutory assessment, new plans issued within the 20-week timescale has declined, although is still at a significantly higher level than both regional and national figures. The High Needs Block programme has a workstream focussed on the EHCP statutory assessment process and the work that takes place to meet the needs of children and young people prior to an EHCP at SEN support stage within schools and settings.

Local SEN2 KPI	Leicestershire			Regional as at Jan 2020	National as at Jan 2020
Total number of EHC plans - (as of August 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	% change	% change
	5039	4566	10.3%	9.5%	10.2%
New EHC plans issued during calendar year – (as of August 2020)	Year 2020 To date	Previous year Aug 2019	% change	% change	% change
	446	419	6.4%	7.1%	10.2%
New EHC plans issued within 20 weeks – including exclusions (as of August 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	Base year 2020	Base year 2020
	92%	98.1%	- 6.2%	67.8%	58.7%
New EHC plans issued within 20 weeks – including exclusions (as of January 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	% change	Base year 2020	Base year 2020
	92%	98.1%	- 6.2%	67.8%	58.7%

Age bandings for pupils with an EHCP (as of August 2020)	Base year 2020	Previous year	Proportion	Proportion	Proportion
Under 5	171	136	3.7%	3.6%	3.9%
5-10	1537	1351	32.5%	30.4%	35.3%
11-15	1756	1587	35.6%	37.9%	35.3%
16-19	1121	1078	21.1%	22.5%	21.3%
20-25	454	414	7.1%	5.6%	6.5%

Education outcomes

Education attainment and progress for children and young people with an EHC plan in Leicestershire is above the national average and above statistical neighbours across all key stages and Post 16 except at Key Stage 2, although in some attainment measures, this change from the previous year is declining. This is reflected in the gap between those with no identified SEN and those pupils with an EHC plan. Leicestershire has the smallest gap against regional statistical neighbours and national comparisons. For those pupils on SEN support, attainment and progress are below the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages. This is also reflected when a comparison is made between the gap between the two groups, with Leicestershire having the largest gap. The Local Area recognises the need to make improvements across all reported attainment years.

At the end of 2019, the overall absence rate for pupils with no SEN, in a primary school is 3.8% and in secondary school is 5.2%. In comparison, absence rates for pupils on SEN support in Leicestershire's primary schools is 5.6% and in secondary schools is 9%. The overall absence rate of the pupils with an EHCP in Leicestershire's primary Schools is 6.9%, secondary schools is 12.5% and special schools 8.7%. This is a smaller gap than the national average.

In 2018/19 there were 25 permanent exclusions. 7 of which are SEN support (4 Primary and 3 secondary) and 2 with an EHCP (1 primary and 1 secondary). Most of these children received support through the Secondary Education and Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs) or from Primary Graduated Response Practitioners from Oakfield Short Stay School prior to starting at a new school. Leicestershire has low numbers of permanent exclusions compared to England and regional averages, which demonstrate the Local Area's commitment to inclusive education for all children and young people. This work with schools continues to be a focus of the Local Area's attention with a focus on building capacity in schools, additional support, advice and guidance from the Local

Authority to further strengthen early identification and offer excellent SEN Support through the provision of new toolkits and training for staff in school settings.

**This section also needs to be checked for updated data and also comparative to CYP without SEN to demonstrate gaps and how that compares nationally.*

Social Care Data

The number of children who are Looked After in at the beginning of June 2020 in Leicestershire is 659 (3rd June 2020) which is 0.62% of the overall population aged under 17 years. The number of Looked After Children with an EHCP on the same date is 112 and for those on an SEN Support Plan, is 77. The Looked After Children make up 1.3% of the total number of SEND children and young people.

Children and young people that are referred within the local authority through the Short Break and Children and Family Wellbeing Panel have social and personal care needs. Personal care needs will be provided through a commissioned domiciliary care contract or through a personal assistant that the parent/s will source via direct payments. Provision of social aspects of need is through a graduated response. Provision can be offered through mainstream activities with additional inclusion funding; SEN groups offered by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service; specialist summer playscheme; commissioned groups running throughout the year; a more tailored approach through a personal assistant funded via direct payments to overnight residential stays.

Health Data/Outcomes

Update to follow

SECTION 3 - Purpose of Plan

This Written Statement of Action (WSOA) will provide a framework for addressing the key issues and areas for development identified by Ofsted and the CQC in their inspection of SEND support and services in the local area of Leicestershire in February 2020. This plan links directly with the revised SEND and Inclusion strategy (2020 – 2023) and the High Needs Development Plan (2018 – 2022) which details the required workstreams and actions to support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes within the available resources.

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The WSOA is a dynamic document that will remain under constant review and therefore change over time as work is progressed. Progress against actions within each priority are rated against the following:

Action to be started or significantly delayed - **RED**

Action in progress - **AMBER**

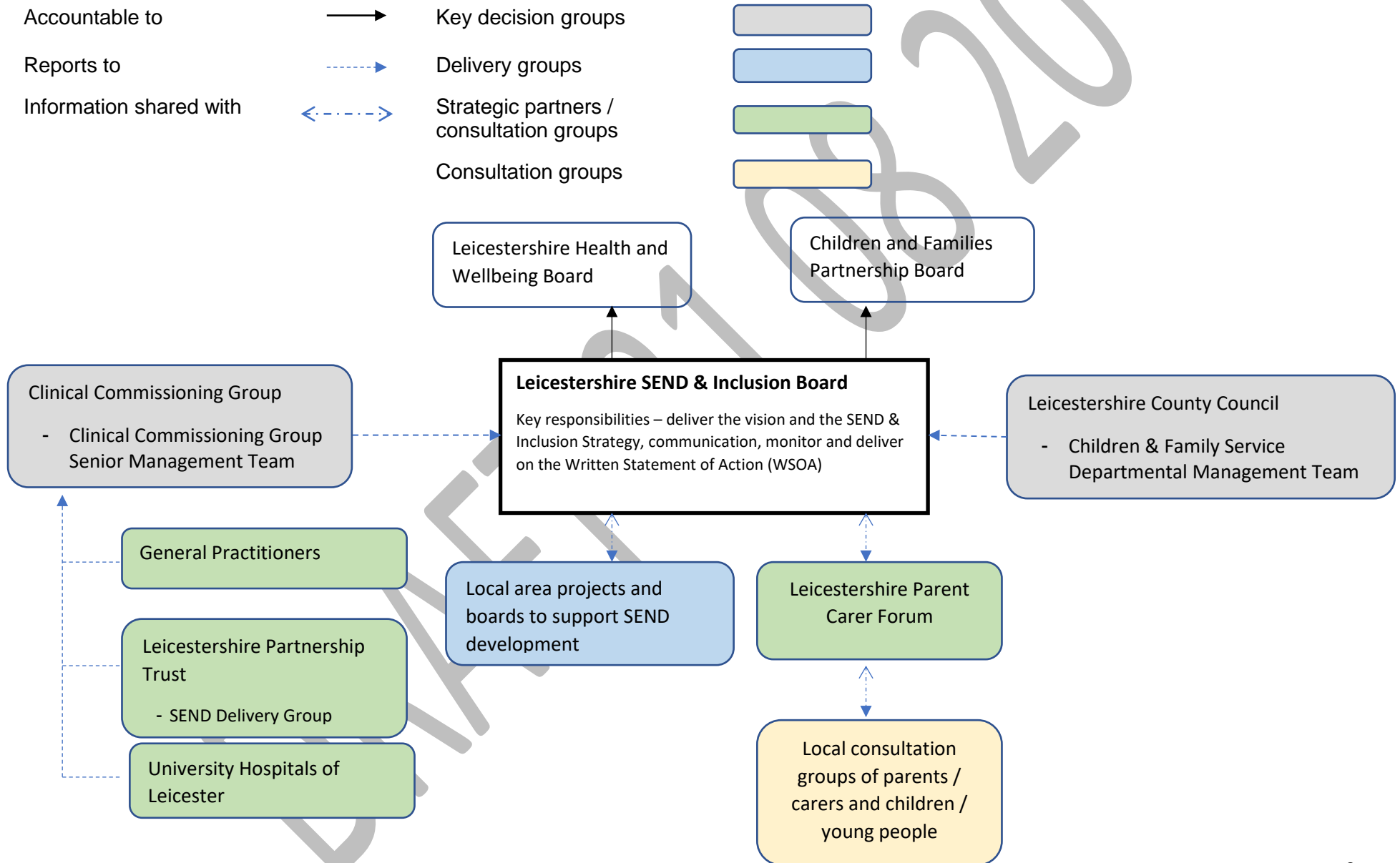
Action on track- **GREEN**

Completed and embedded - **BLUE**

Action not yet started, as dependent on or awaiting other actions to be completed first - **PINK**

The RAG rating above will be used as part of the monitoring process going forward which will be undertaken by the Leicestershire SEND and Inclusion Board. At the start of the improvement journey some significant issues required immediate action and have either been completed or are underway at the point of submission of this WSOA. Milestone completion dates are included in the WSOA, which will act as a critical measure over the next 18 months

SECTION 4 - Governance Structure



SECTION 5

Schedule of progress review sessions. Table of meetings, dates, invitees etc.

Date	Who	Actions
29/05/20	P Sumner, B Wile	Template agreed (LA SEND)
03/06/20	CCG, LA	Template shared, agreed between SEND and CCG
05/06/20	CCG, LPT, LA	Template agreed with LPT
08/06/20	STS, T Common, P Sumner	Inspection and WSOA development update
09/06/20	CCG, LPT, LA	Collaboration space and access rights agreed
11/06/20	SEND and Incl. Board	Strategy for development of WSOA agreed
16/06/20	D Philippides, L McCalla, B Wile	YP engagement initial discussion
16/06/20	IT governance, B Wile	Collaboration space detail and documents (agreements) prepared and distributed for sign off
18/06/20	PCF, CCG, LPT and LA	WSOA template, strategy for development and info sharing agreements discussed
16 th , 18 th , 24 th June 2020	SENCO Net, T Common, B Wile	Inspection and WSOA development update
22/06/20	CCG, LPT, LA	Catch up, follow up shared space agreements
23/06/20	D Philippides, L McCalla, B Wile	YP survey / questionnaire planning
23/06/20	PCF CCG, LPT, and LA	Shared space discussion, update on developments
25/06/20	DfE (K Rowland), PS, TC, BWile	WSOA progress update
02/07/20	LLR LA reps	Commissioning Strategy planning
07/07/20	CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA update session, CCG shared space agreement
09/07/20	DfE	WSOA progress update
13/07/20	SEND and Incl. Board	WSOA development schedule and QALF update
14/07/20	Parent/Carer, T Common, B Wile	WSOA planning schedule
14/07/20	PCF, CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA steering/working group
16/07/20	SEND Alliance, CCG, LPT, PCF, LA	WSOA workshop
04/08/20	CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA working group
05/08/20	Children & Family Service Departmental Management team	Agreement on format and background information
11/08/20	PCF, CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA steering/working group

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13/08/20	SEND Alliance, CCG, LPT, PCF, LA	WSOA workshop
18/08/20	LA	WSOA workshop
20/08/20	PCF, CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA steering/working group
24/08/20	SEND & Inclusion Board	Update on the Written Statement of Action
25/08/20	CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA working group
01/09/20	Children & Family Overview Scrutiny Committee	Member consultation
02/09/20	PCF, CCG, LPT, LA	WSOA steering/working group
22/09/20	SEND & Inclusion Board	Agreement on the action plan
05/10/20	SEND & Inclusion Board	Final sign-off and submission to Ofsted

Still to be scheduled/dates agreed for:

Weekly catch-ups with CCG, LPT, LA from mid-July to mid-September to be scheduled

Fortnightly catch-ups with CCG, LPT, LA and PCF from mid-July to mid-September to be scheduled

- PCF and SEND Alliance workshops (September 2020)
- YP workshop x 1 (September 2020)
- Scrutiny engagement (September 1st 2020)
- Cabinet Briefings (15/09/20, 29/09/20)
- Elected Member briefings x 2 (August, September 2020)
- Schools engagement workshop x 2 (August, September 2020)
- Also regular updates through Local Offer and surveys (YP and Parent Carer)
- Virtual Local Offer Roadshow – September 2020

- CCG/LPT governance sign-off – September 2020
- DMT and Lead Member update mid-August

WSOA LA engagement representatives – P Sumner – Assistant Director Education and SEND, B Wile –SEND Development Lead, T Common – Head of Service, SEND, M Sutton – Service Manager, SENA, C Allison Service Manager - SENA (Interim), G Dakin – Head of Field Social Work, C Davis – SEND Partnerships, Quality & Projects Officer

WSOA CCG engagement representatives – C West – Director of Nursing and Quality, P Vyze – Designated Clinical Officer, S Little – Children's Personalisation Commissioner

WSOA LPT engagement representatives – C Tagg – Service Group Manager, D Kimberley- SEND Lead and Children's OT

WSOA PCF engagement representatives – A Bromley – Chair, Parent Carer Forum, S Rigby – Secretary, Parent Carer Forum, Helen Cuttle – Treasurer, Parent Carer Forum

WSOA YP engagement representatives – D Philippides – Autism Outreach Teacher, L McCalla – Learning Hub Access, J McCormick – Voice Worker (+ Autism and YP Council reps), – M McDonald-Junor – Service Manager Specialist Teaching Service, Kate Wells – Team Manager Hearing Service

WSOA SEND Alliance representatives – Sue Whiting, Gillian Bowers, Louise Engels

WSOA Schools engagement representatives – Marie Waring (Primary Head rep), Richard Cahill (Secondary Head rep), Janet Thompson (Special School rep), Ros Hopkins (Special School rep), Sharon Townes (FE College rep)

WSOA Member engagement representatives - Cllr D Taylor – Lead Member, Children and Family Services, Cllr B Seaton – Deputy Lead Member, Children and Family Services

SECTION 6 – Leicestershire’s local area response to the two significant weaknesses

PRIORITY ONE

- To develop and implement a clearly defined joint commissioning strategy for 0–25 SEND provision

OUTCOMES

- To better meet children and young people’s Special Educational Needs/Disabilities through an agreed understanding of population level of need and the implementation of a joint commissioning strategic plan.
- Joint commissioning activity delivered through the above plan enables the procurement of services that meet needs and provides good value for money, whilst using available resources efficiently.
- Children and Young People’s needs are assessed and met in a timely and purposeful manner, with health, education and social care needs identified at the earliest point and appropriate support put in place (right support, right time).
- There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities to address the health needs of CYP with special educational needs.
- There is a clear, consistent and equitable outcome-based universal, targeted and specialist-level offer for children and young people with SEND.

Families are well informed about available services and support and this is reflected in service user feedback

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber - In progress Green - On Track Blue - Completed Pink - To be started
1.1 Identify and agree a steering group membership to develop the joint commissioning strategy	Co-produce an accountability and responsibility structure for the strategy development	Chris West / Paula Sumner	Structure agreed following consultation with PCF, LPT and LA		TBC by Leads	AMBER
1.2 To produce a statement of purpose with a clear vision, framework and priorities for the development of joint commissioning of SEND in Leicestershire	Secure approval through governance bodies of CCG Sign-off by SEND and Inclusion Board	Steering group lead	Within all new or recommissioned services documentation, there is clear evidence of consideration of joint commissioning		30/09/2020	PINK
1.3 Complete and publish an updated Local Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for SEND based on information from a number of sources including health, social care and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather Leicestershire data across education, health and social care. - Gather policy and service information relevant to SEND - Hold a workshop to understand the data and identify gaps and recommendations 	Kelly-Marie Evans (Public Health)	Analysis of support requirements to meet local area need	Population trends and levels of need are identified. Support and services are planned appropriately to meet need	31/10/2020	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
1.4 Review the gaps and recommendations chapter identified in the JSNA	- Draw up actions and allocate leads	Joint Commissioning Steering Group			30/11/2020	PINK
1.5 Co-produce a Countywide Local Area joint SEND data and quality-dashboard, which includes qualitative and quantitative information to ensure we use feedback to drive change, improve services based on the JSNA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish partnership data monitoring group - Identify the key performance indicators across education, health and care - Develop a process for gathering indicator information from different services - Establish a format and schedule for reporting - Key indicators indicate detailed analysis required - Assessing need and future impact to gather additional vulnerable group information, e.g. 	Data Monitoring Group			To be agreed following revised JSNA issue	PINK

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
	adopted children and those that are no longer looked after					
1.6 Recording of health outcomes to inform commissioning decisions: Health information management system are configured to record health outcomes for reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the health information management system to record and monitor progress towards health outcomes - Health services Annual Review template available within the information management system to support better quality information to be included within EHCP's - Quality assurance of written health outcomes 	Dawn Kimberley			To be agreed by CCG by 31/10/2020	AMBER
1.7 Information sharing between the local authority and health services,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data sharing protocol in place and Leicestershire 	Data Monitoring Group		Secure routine data transfer processes to QA SEND data,	To be agreed by partners by end of 31/10//2020	

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
including the School Nursing service: Data sharing protocol and process in place to regularly share information on those children and young people with SEND that are Electively Home Educated (EHE) and those not in education, employment or training to ensure that their health needs are being met and the appropriate support is in place	Partnership Trust (LPT) receive and record educational status for children and young people who are EHE or missing education / home tuition - Data sharing process in place – this will need to consider the incompatibility of Information Management Systems and the lack of NHS numbers to support an automated electronic upload into LPT datasets. - Needs of other vulnerable groups to be considered as part of the			with a specific focus on vulnerable groups such as EHE, CME, NEET & YOT cohorts		AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
	keeping in touch process, e.g. accessing hospital school, missing education.					
1.8 Use of health information management system: All health staff responsible for flagging SEND children and young people to ensure the needs of children and young people with SEND can be met. Regular sharing of the NHS Number with the local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data cleansing to take place with data from the local authority - Process in place to flag children and young people as SEND - Mechanism in place for regular sharing of the NHS number 	D Kimberley			To be agreed by CCG/LPT by 31/12/2020	AMBER
1.9 To identify opportunities for joint commissioning of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To produce an action plan to deliver effective integrated working - Identify the current commissioning 	Joint Commissioning Steering Group			31/12/2020	

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
	arrangements for all partners - Identify all budgets that are allocated to services that could be jointly commissioned - Identify the demand (and gaps) in services					PINK
1.10 To develop and implement revised commissioning approaches, in partnership with children, young people, parents and carers, to ensure equity and alignment to new strategy	-To agree packages that are moderated across partnership including parents and carers -Dates to be agreed	S Little			31/12/2020	AMBER
1.11 Establishment of multi-agency panel meetings to agree on decisions to assess, issue plans and ISP placements	- Prepare and agree TOR and documentation for D1 and D2 panels - Schedule weekly meetings	Marian Sutton (SENA)	More consistent decision making Improved	Meeting notes to evidence decisions for quarterly analysis	D1 weekly meetings in place from July 2020, D2 to be fully in place from September 2020	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
1.12 Co-produce and implement a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) compliant and efficient ND pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a sustainable ND delivery model - Establish quality standards - Assess viability of place-based, integrated teams - Implement service user engagement and involvement - Establish a system wide infrastructure model 	Tracey Jackman (CCG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASD services provided throughout assessment and post diagnosis -Waiting times for assessment are reduced to ...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from parents/carers - Reduced waiting times - New pathway on LO 	31/03/2021	AMBER
1.13 Establish service specifications for Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of specifications 	Claire Tagg	Children and families experience equitable and effective outcome-based services Feedback from service users	Commissioned provision is responsive and sustainable	31/12/2020	AMBER
1.14 Forum established to address complex case issues and agree child-centred solutions across agencies	Joint Solutions Panel established Review Terms of Reference	Sharon Cooke (Social Care)	Tripartite funding and commissioning in place	Meeting notes to evidence decisions for quarterly analysis	In place Autumn 2019	BLUE

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
1.15 Review existing commissioning arrangements (including transport) to reflect the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice and embed the changes needed to align with new strategy	-To undertake a joint baseline assessment of current commissioned SEND services (including looking at value for money and performance outcomes) -To identify joint commissioning gaps and opportunities	Joint Commissioning Steering Group	- CYP's SEND needs will be met by unified commissioning. - Clear understanding of the impact of current services and the areas that need to be improved	- Data will be made available and monitored to quantify numbers of jointly commissioned support packages - Service User Evaluations	31/12/2020	PINK
1.16 Identify all budgets that are allocated to services that could be jointly commissioned		Joint Commissioning Steering Group			31/03/2021	PINK
1.17 To develop and secure partnership sign-up to a Joint Working Agreement defining all partners' roles and responsibilities and ensures that the views and experiences of		Brenda Wile	Signed Working Agreement		31/10/2020	GREEN

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber - In progress Green - On Track Blue - Completed Pink - To be started
children, young people and parent carers are at the centre of all planning and delivery of provision						
1.18 Agree and Implement a quality assurance framework for SEND processes and services.	Establish a regular cycle of audit, analysis, feedback, reporting and moderation of EHC plans. Carry out rigorous QA of commissioned services including ISPs	Brenda Wile	Audit reports	Improvements in quality of EHCPs	31/10/2020	AMBER
1.19 Agree a new Joint Commissioning Strategy which includes a clear Outcomes Framework for assessing impact for SEND 0-25 across the Local Area that identifies and responds to needs		Joint Commissioning Steering Group			31/03/2021	PINK

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On Track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started

DRAFT 210820

PRIORITY TWO

- To improve the quality of EHC plans, including: the drawing up of EHC plans; the inaccuracy with which the plans reflect children and young people's needs; the absence of good-quality outcomes in EHC plans; the inconsistency with which plans include contributions from education and particularly health and care professionals; the lack of any formal quality assurance framework to improve new and existing plans.

OUTCOMES

- Education, Health and Care Plans meet the special educational needs of each child or young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood.
- EHC needs assessments and plans establish and record the views, interests and aspirations of the parents and child or young person as well as providing a full description of the child or young person's special educational needs and any health and social care need
- There are clear outcomes within EHC plans based on the child or young person's needs and aspirations and help to prepare them for adulthood.
- EHC Plans specify the provision required and how education, health and care services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and support the achievement of the agreed outcomes
- Person-centred approaches, transparent systems and decision-making processes are used with clear lines of governance involving Education, Health and Care
- EHC plans are effective in identifying and addressing the holistic needs of children and young people
- Statutory SEND processes and decision making are fully compliant with statutory guidance (Code of Practice) and timescales
- Timeliness for all needs assessment requests and EHC Plans, begins to improve immediately
- Needs Assessments and EHC Plans are of good quality; co-produced with parents/carers and children and young people; person-centred and outcome focused d. Parent and carer confidence and satisfaction in the system is increased

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
2.1 Overall improvement of SENA processes from receipt of request for assessment to issue of plans where appropriate	Full review of the existing statutory assessment process Revised process and pathway to EHC plan developed	Marian Sutton Cath Allison	The agreed pathway is fully embedded across all organisations including social care and health professionals	Satisfaction of parents and carers	In line with HNB workstream plan	AMBER
2.2 Revision of the EHC plan template	Revised EHC plan template will be consulted on and implemented	Cath Allison	Template agreed, available on the website and implemented within the SENA service	Improvement in the quality of EHC plans	31/10/2020	AMBER
2.3 Decisions to assess and decision to issue panels to be fully operational with multi-agency engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Terms of Reference for panel - Implement schedule for panel meetings 	Marian Sutton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft and final EHC plans will be shared with key professional contributors through audit and panel processes - TOR and meeting notes 	Reduction in Tribunal requests	30/09/2020	AMBER
2.4 QA framework implemented that includes robust EHC plan audits and moderation process to be agreed and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Steering Group - Multi-agency processes agreed - Agree reporting schedule to the 	Brenda Wile	Lessons learned captured with improvement activity to be a key element of the overall SEND QA framework	QA processes will evidence that plans are of high-quality Feedback from C&YP and their families will show improved	30/09/2020	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
embedded as business as usual	SEND & Inclusion Board			confidence in EHC plans		
2.5 Timeliness of completion of plans to remain high whilst improving quality	Close oversight of timeliness and quality of advice by team/service managers	Marian Sutton / Cath Allison	- Monthly reports on EHC plan completion rates, and audits to demonstrate improvement in quality - Timely and accurate reporting to strategic leadership on quality of EHC plans	Key performance indicator for timeliness of issuing plans within 20 weeks remains above 95%	31/03/2021	AMBER
2.6 Guidance on the quality and standards for EHC plans agreed and training undertaken to ensure plan writers and auditors are clear about what good looks like	Audit and review current practice with partners and identify barriers to producing high quality Advice and EHC plans	Brenda Wile	A shared understanding of what constitutes 'high quality' advice and EHC plans	-All EHC plans will have good quality advice from education, health and social care professionals. - Plans will be high quality, concise, clear and accessible. - Increased parental involvement (fewer	31/10/2020	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
				complaints re EHCP quality)		
2.7 IT system for SENA processes in place and functioning well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procurement of preferred IT solution that enable collaborative electronic EHC plans and support SEND processes to be continued Engage with parents/carers and partners on the development and implementation of the system -Finalise project plan and timescales for pilot and wider roll out, including monitoring - Develop guidance for all users - Review learning from pilot and update project and training plan for 	Lindsey Kirby	CFS DMT report and project plan	Guidance documents available on the Local Offer and through SENDIASS -Clear guidance in place for parents / carers unable to access the web-based system directly about where to seek help, and support to input information for them. Available through SEND Assessment team, SENDIASS and the local offer	Go live 30/04/2021	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
	implementation, ensuring ongoing reviews are built in					
2.8 Annual Review process/workflow improved in terms of timeliness, consistency, appropriate professionals attending reviews and the quality of the EHC plans used as a tool to support young people to achieve their outcomes	-Design new processes, documents and KPIs -Review, refine and implement new processes -Complete outstanding ARs	Cath Allison Dawn Kimberley	HNB outcomes	LPT engagement will support clinical engagement and reporting compliance	HNB workstream end date (TBC) Interim timescales for AR backlog 'catch-up' within HNB development programme (to be included)	AMBER
2.9 Development of an outcomes framework to ensure outcomes are clearly defined in plans throughout the system and ensure outcomes remain		Marian Sutton Mhairi McDonald-Junor Dawn Kimberley	- Improved quality of education, health and social care outcomes defined in EHCP's. - Outcomes will be personalised, achievable and measurable at annual reviews.		31/12/2020	AMBER

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
personalised to the C&YP needs			- Overall plans will be SMARTer			
2.10 Implementation of evaluation process at the completion of EHC plans to ensure C&YP and their families have the opportunity to provide feedback and comments related to the statutory process		Cath Allison	100% of parents or carers will receive a survey to complete once their child or young person's EHC plan is finalised	Analysis of evaluations will demonstrate improving satisfaction of families ? % of parents, carers that felt that they were listened to and engaged, ?% will tell us that they have seen the plan, ?% that they are satisfied We will collect baseline data and set targets for improvement	31/12/2020	AMBER
2.11 Implement effective step across processes to and from Inclusion Service	Ensure process is well understood and step across is timely	Helen Bakewell	Support needs will be met for more children and young people within SEN support through graduated response	Greater understanding by all schools of SEN support strategies More appropriate requests for EHC plans	31/09/2020	GREEN

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
2.12 Provide enhanced family support through the EHC plan and SEN support processes	Launch SEND Handbook	Tom Common	Draft SEN Toolkit	Schools and families are better informed about SEN support strategies and the graduated response Families feel better supported with fewer re-referrals	31/10/2020	AMBER
2.13 Develop a strengths-based approach to EHC plans and Annual Reviews embedding values of inclusion and independence		Multi-agency panel	Panel meeting notes	- EHC plans will include information on what is working well for the family and encourage families to build on their unique strengths. - Preparation for adulthood starts from an earlier age in the child's journey.	31/10/2020	AMBER
2.14 Develop responsive process for CYP with	-Identify possible situations requiring response and	Helen Bakewell Cath Allison Gareth Dakin Tony Barnard			31/03/2021	

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FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS to implement	LEAD	EVIDENCE	IMPACT MEASURES	COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS Red - Delayed Amber – In progress Green – On track Blue – Completed Pink – To be started
EHCPs where needs or requirements change	develop appropriate pathways including crises e.g. breakdown of LAC placement or PEX					PINK

SECTION 6

SEND and Inclusion Strategy Action Plan link and reference
HNB development plan link and reference

SECTION 7

Monitoring arrangements

The WSOA will be regularly updated and presented to every SEND and Inclusion Board meeting, CCG governance boards and DFC DMT with update reports on progress also presented to Lead members.

SECTION 8

Glossary of Terms

To be completed and included

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

SEND AND INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR 2020 TO 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, which is a key partnership strategy to support the education, health and care needs of children and young people in Leicestershire.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The primary legislation regarding children and young people with SEND is the Children and Families Act 2014. This sets out the duties that local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups must fulfil. Since the Leicestershire SEND Strategy 2017 to 2020 was published, a SEND Local Area Inspection framework has been introduced and Leicestershire was inspected in February of this year, receiving a Written Statement of Action. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy outlines local priorities and sets out how the County Council and its partners will improve services and outcomes over the next three years. The action plan within the Strategy identifies five priority areas of activity and should be read alongside the Written Statement of Action Plan.
3. The 2020-23 Strategy is a re-refresh of the previous SEND Strategy that was taken to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2018 and agreed by the Cabinet on 10 April 2018. The local authority has considered the wider system that SEND operates within and has re-configured current services with further developments to enhance the inclusion offer to the education sector. Inclusion has been reflected within the SEND and Inclusion Strategy by ensuring actions reflect the work to support schools pre and post SEND identification. Workforce development is a priority within the strategy to provide a strategic steer to ensure that parents and carers have full confidence in mainstream school staff and the wider SEND workforce.

Background

4. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2020 to 2023 (attached at Appendix A to this report) sets out how partners across the local area plan to support children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND or wider needs that affect their ability to access education to achieve the best possible outcomes.
5. It will provide the overarching framework for service development in SEND and Inclusion Services. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy has been developed in consultation with local area partners and parents and carers. It sets out the aspirations of the SEND and Inclusion Board for the period 2020 to 2023.
6. Implementation of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy will be monitored by the SEND and Inclusion Board reporting to the Children and Families Partnership, comprising representatives from the Lead Member for Children and Families Service; Local Authority Children and Families Service, Adults and Communities and Public Health; Clinical Commissioning Groups; Leicestershire Partnership Trust; Special, Primary and Secondary Schools; Further Education and the Parent Carer Forum.
7. The strategy is underpinned by a detailed work plan outlining the workstreams that will deliver the priorities, and which are accountable to the SEND and Inclusion Board. There will be regular reviews of progress against the action plan to the SEND and Inclusion Board, and each workstream will include reporting the progress made against outcomes and performance measures. Subsequent reports will be made to the Children and Families Partnership.
8. Progress in implementing the strategy will be communicated to key partners via their representatives on the SEND and Inclusion Board and will be published on the Local Offer. Feedback from parents/carers and children/young people will be sought on an on-going basis. The strategy will be reviewed annually.
9. In June 2020, the draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy was presented to the SEND and Inclusion Board and the West Leicestershire and the East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups. The strategy is being presented to the Cabinet for approval in September 2020. Any comments made by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be reported to the Cabinet. The Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum are active members of the SEND and Inclusion Board and has approved the draft Strategy.
10. An Easy Read version of the strategy will be produced by children and young people once the strategy has received final sign-off by the Cabinet.

Consultation

11. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 2023 has been based on a number of consultations carried out for use within the SEND Strategy 2017 - 2020 and the development of SEND resource provision across Leicestershire. Consultation for the SEND Strategy took place in the form of workshops across the County and a questionnaire to capture the views of parents and carers and children and young people. A workshop was held with the SEND and Inclusion Board members in November 2019 to examine the SEND Strategy and identify areas that needed to go forward into the refreshed strategy and any other identified

areas. The Parent Carer Forum surveyed parents and carers during the SEND inspection in February 2020, providing an update on issues faced by them. An analysis of the results found that there were a number of issues that were still being reflected that were identified during the 2017 consultation.

12. A full-scale consultation took place on the development of the SEND resource provision, capturing views of parents and carers and children / young people on the design, classroom size, facilities and provision.
13. Due to the Covid-19 Government guidance, a workshop for parents and carers and children and young people did not take place. To gather more current views from children and young people, contact was made with SEND group leads that run forums for young people aged 11 years plus. Comments from all discussions and questionnaires have been included within the strategy to form the priorities and actions.

Resource Implications

14. The strategy provides the strategic steer for the SEND and Inclusion Board. The actions are resourced through existing staffing or may form part of a programme of work, for example the High Needs Block programme, where additional resourcing has been agreed.

Timetable for Decisions

15. Comments received from the Committee will be included within the strategy and reported to the Cabinet on 18 September 2020.

Background Papers

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2017-2020 – Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5 March 2018 -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=5322&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members under the Members News in Brief service.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2020 to 2023

Appendix B – Human Rights Impact Assessment screening tool

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

17. The Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Screening tool has been completed and a decision has been made that a full impact assessment does not need to be completed.

Leicestershire
SEND



Leicestershire local area SEND & Inclusion Strategy – 2020 to 2023

Our vision in Leicestershire for children with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – for them to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives.

Foreword

Welcome to the second version of Leicestershire's local area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, West Leicestershire and East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups. The publication of the strategy comes at a time of unprecedented challenge for all services, compounded by the recent Coronavirus pandemic. Leicestershire was inspected by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, the good work taking place across services and between services and parents and carers was recognised, however, the inspection has provided some actions that urgently need to be addressed.

Crucial to the success of the strategy, is the important role parents and carers have in shaping the experience for their children and young people. The SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board across Leicestershire is committed to co-producing work with parents and carers and communities to raise aspirations and build resilience.

We would like to offer thanks to all those that have co-produced the strategy and to those engaged in supporting children and young people with SEND and their families in Leicestershire. The strategy, in continuing to outline our response to these reforms, is also designed to reiterate our continuing commitment to high quality services.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the vision and priorities in Leicestershire for developing support and provision for children and young people with SEND.

In September 2014 the Children and Families Act 2014 came into force. Part 3 of the Act is entitled Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In the Act, Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups have a number of duties they are required to meet.

This strategy sets out how the Leicestershire local area plans to support children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 to achieve their best possible outcomes, in line with the reforms and in light of our current local position and other local developments. It sets out our priorities for the period from 2020 to 2023 and is underpinned by a strategic plan setting out how these priorities will be achieved.

2. Leicestershire local area SEND & Inclusion Priorities for 2020 to 2023

Co-production with parents and carers and children and young people will run as a thread throughout each priority.

Priority 1 - To identify and meet children's special educational needs as early as possible.

Priority 2 – Responsive, inclusive and effective provision for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND).

Priority 3 – Understanding and preparation for change (Transitions).

Priority 4 - Strategic partnerships, joint working, joint commissioning and consultation.

Priority 5 - Develop the workforce.

3. National and local drivers

National

Delivering effective services to children and young people with SEND is covered by legislation and statutory guidance, providing the framework for public bodies to carry out.

The Equality Act 2010 is legislation that protects the rights of individuals to promote a fair and more equal society. The Act requires public bodies and service providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people with SEND do not face discrimination compared with children and young people that do not have SEND. As part of the duty for public sector organisations, we are required to consciously consider how we promote equal opportunities for children and young people with SEND and the service delivery that is offered.

As part of the commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is a commitment to the inclusive education of disabled children and young people and removal of barriers to learning and participation within mainstream education.

The Children and Family Act 2014 seeks to reform the way support is provided for children and families with SEND. The Act places the views, wishes and aspirations of children and young people and their parents and carers at the heart of the SEND system, requiring a culture change in the ways that professionals work with families and across organisational boundaries. The Act has a common strand with the Equality Act 2010 on removing barriers to learning.

The Care Act 2014 sets out local authorities' responsibilities in providing care and support for adults who may need it. In combination with the Children and Family Act, it enables areas to prepare children and young people for adulthood from the earliest possible stage.

The SEND Code of Practice provides the statutory guidance for relevant organisations who work with children and young people with SEND and their families.

Local

The Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership Plan 2018-21 brings together all agencies involved with children and young people. This overarching plan addresses the needs of all children and young people, their families and carers and is underpinned by five priorities:

Priority 1: Ensure the best start in life

Priority 2: Keep children safe and free from harm

Priority 3: Support children and families to be resilient

Priority 4: Ensure vulnerable families receive personalised, integrated care and support

Priority 5: Enable children to have good physical and mental health

Leicestershire County Council is committed to taking a 'whole life' approach to people who are disabled. This means that services do not just focus on the immediate and short term needs of the person, but instead providing a long-term view. For

children and young people, it requires all partners – health, education, adult social care and more – working together to put their aspirations at the heart of support planning. As well as the priorities included in this strategy these principles are a central part of the Council's 'Whole Life Disability' Strategy and 'Preparing for Adulthood' programme.

The Leicestershire local area SEND & Inclusion Strategy continues to be underpinned by the gap analysis provided in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2015, a refresh is due for completion in autumn 2020. This will be used to inform the action plan associated with the SEND & Inclusion Strategy.

The 2015 JSNA identified an increasing prevalence in certain conditions that will increase the need for support, school placements and the impact on service delivery. There is a need for the local area to work across the SEND system to meet the increased prevalence in conditions through a graduated response and work with children, young people and their parents and carers to commission responsive, sustainable services for the future at an individual and strategic level.

Ensuring a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood for all young people with SEND is key to improving outcomes. Services can raise the aspirations of and support young people aged 16-25 years with SEN to achieve a level of independence that improves the quality of their lives within their local communities.

4. The local area SEND inspection

Each local area across England is subject to a SEND inspection. These are carried out by Ofsted and the Care and Quality Commission. Leicestershire was subject to an inspection in February 2020. The inspection drew out strengths within the main findings, including the determined effort since 2016 to implement the disability and special educational needs reforms effectively. There is an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop Leicestershire's SEND arrangements, with a strategy in place. Leaders work collaboratively to provide children and young people with SEND the resources they need. There are well established working relationships across education, health and care services to identify and meet the needs of children and their families.

The SEND inspection is not graded, but if there are areas deemed as having serious weaknesses, a written statement of action is required to explain how the local area will address the identified areas. This will require a re-inspection of the key actions identified in approximately eighteen months' time. It was determined by the SEND inspection team that both the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting the statement to Ofsted on the following:

- The absence of a clearly defined joint commissioning strategy for 0-25 SEND provision.
- Systemic weakness in the quality of EHC plans, including: the drawing up of the EHC plans; the inaccuracy with which the plans reflect the children and young people's needs; the absence of good-quality outcomes in EHC plans; the inconsistency with which plans include contributions from education, and also health and care professionals; the lack of any formal quality assurance framework to improve new and existing plans.

For the report on the Leicestershire local area SEND inspection, please follow this [link](#).

5. The local context (data)

The Children of Leicestershire

The Office of National Statistics estimates for 2017 suggest that approximately 209,231 Children and Young People (CYP) under the age of 26 years live in Leicestershire. This equates to approximately a third of the total population. There are 105,436 children and young people educated in Leicestershire state-funded schools (aged 3-18). The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) shows that 13% of children in Leicestershire are living with families that are income deprived. The highest proportion of children living in poverty live in the Charnwood area of the county. CYP from minority ethnic groups account for 12% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed. The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 11,086 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 3,801 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 14.1% of the Leicestershire school population.

The national SEN2 data collection includes all children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan that are the financial responsibility of Leicestershire. This will include all children and young people that are educated within Leicestershire schools and in other schools outside of Leicestershire, including independent schools and non-maintained special schools. The national information is used to monitor Leicestershire against the regional and national performance and provides the authority with insight into areas for further investigation at a local level. The latest information from 2019 shows that Leicestershire continues to see a higher rate of total number of EHCP's than the region and national. The latest local data for August 2020 shows that there is a total of 5,039 active EHCP's. The largest age bandings for the total number of EHCP's continues to be for 5-15 year olds and with the largest increase in EHCP's from August 2017 to August 2020 being in the 20-25 age group with a 90% increase. The number of new EHCP's issued over throughout 2019 was 790. This is a 19.7% increase on the previous year and is well above both regional and national figures. At the beginning of August 2020, Leicestershire had issued 446 new EHCP's from 1st January which is slightly above the 419 new EHCP's that had been issued the previous year. New EHC plans as a proportion of the total number of EHCP's continues to increase and the proportion for Leicestershire is higher than for both regional and national. As a result of the increasing workload for services contributing to the EHCP statutory assessment, new plans issued within the 20--week timescale has declined, although is still at a significantly higher level than both regional and national figures. The High Needs Block programme as a workstream focussed on the EHCP statutory assessment process and the work that takes place to meet the needs of children and young people prior to an EHCP at SEN support stage within schools and settings.

Many children and young people with EHCPs are educated in mainstream schools or special schools. It is the Local Area's ambition that the majority of children with EHCPs can be included and educated in mainstream schools, or resourced provisions within a mainstream context, where they can learn in their local communities and with their peers. As at January 2020, 50% of our children and young people are educated within mainstream and 36% are educated in our Area Special Schools and 13.5% are educated in independent or non-maintained special schools.

The Special Educational Needs population



School Census 2020

11,086 SEN Support

3,801 EHCP

SEND as a total of school population:

SEN Support



SEND reforms came into legislation in 2014

SEN support has seen a 2.9% increase since 2015

EHCP has seen a 38.4% increase since 2015

EHCP's account for 3.6% of the school population



SEN2 2020

EHCP has seen a 73.5% increase since 2015

There has been a 12.5% increase in EHCPs from the previous year (10.2% national)



Timeliness for issuing an EHCP as at January 2020 was 92%

Average 94.9% - health producing advice for statutory assessments within 6 weeks of a request



Early Intervention Service

- 200 – 300 referrals per month
- C&YP assessed and commence treatment within 4 weeks
- Reduced numbers referred into CAMHS by 30% - 50%
- Delivery of advice, support seamless transfer between services

Education

Education attainment and progress for children and young people with an EHC plan in Leicestershire is above the national average and above statistical neighbours across all key stages and Post 16 except Key Stage 2, although in some attainment measures, this change from the previous year is declining. This is reflected in the gap between those with no identified SEN and those pupils with an EHC plan. Leicestershire has the smallest gap against regional, statistical neighbours and national comparisons. For those pupils on SEN support, attainment and progress are below the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages. This is also reflected when a comparison is made between the gap between the two groups, with Leicestershire having the largest gap. The Local Area recognises the need to make improvements across all reported attainment years.

At the end of 2019, the overall absence rate for pupils with no SEN, in a primary school is 3.8% and in secondary school is 5.2%. In comparison, absence rates for pupils on SEN Support in Leicestershire's Primary schools is 5.6% and in secondary schools is 9%. The overall absence rate of the pupils with an EHCP in Leicestershire's primary schools is

6.9%, secondary schools is 12.5% and special schools 8.7%. This a smaller gap than the national average.

In 2018/19 there were 25 permanent exclusions. 7 of which are SEN support (4 Primary and 3 secondary) and 2 with an EHCP (1 primary and 1 secondary). Most of these children received support through the Secondary Education and Inclusion Partnerships (SEIPs) or from Primary Graduated Response Practitioners from Oakfield Short Stay School prior to starting at a new school. Leicestershire has low numbers of permanent exclusions compared to England and regional averages, which demonstrate the Local Area's commitment to inclusive education for all children and young people. This work with schools continues to be a focus of the Local Area's attention with a focus on building capacity in schools, additional support, advice and guidance from the Local Authority to further strengthen early identification and offer excellent SEN Support through the provision of new toolkits and training for staff in school settings.

Health

On the 24th July 2020, a total of 55 children had a Personal Health Budget across Leicestershire and Rutland. This breaks down into the following Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) areas:

Name of CCG	Number of children and young people with a Personal Health Budget	
	With EHCP	Without EHCP
East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG	22	9
West Leicestershire CCG	16	8

The children that are supported have a variety of physical and mental health needs. Some examples of the physical children that are supported are children with very high respiratory needs such as beyond the mouth suction, tracheostomies and/or require supportive ventilation. Support is given to

support children with very complex epilepsy, complex bowel management, mobility or complex feeding such as total parental nutrition (TPN). Some of the mental health cohort that are supported are those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD, complex challenging behaviours and/or self-harming behaviours.

Social care

The number of children who are Looked After in at the beginning of June 2020 in Leicestershire is 659 (3rd June 2020) which is 0.62% of the overall population aged under 17 years. The number of Looked After Children with an EHCP on the same date is 112 and for those on a SEN Support Plan, is 77. The Looked After Children make up 1.3% of the total number of SEND children and young people.

Children and young people that are referred within the local authority through the Short Break and Children and Family Wellbeing Panel have social and personal care needs. Personal care needs will be provided through a commissioned domiciliary care contract or through a personal assistant that the parent/s will source via direct

payments. Provision of social aspects of need is through a graduated response. Provision can be offered through mainstream activities with additional inclusion funding; SEN groups offered by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service; specialist summer playscheme; commissioned groups running throughout the year; a more tailored approach through a personal assistant funded via direct payments to overnight residential stays.

6. What our families tell us?

We are confused about what Provision is available in Leicestershire
Parent./carer. 2017

Leaving school, turning 18 is still a scary time... where do the services go?
Parent/carers. 2017

Some of us have to pay for our own reports and go to charities for equipment our child needs
Parent./carer. 2017

The length of time it takes to get a diagnosis to allow you to get help and support
PCF survey SEND inspection 2020

Some mainstream schools don't understand my child's diagnosis or how to meet their needs
Parent./carer. 2017

Training the right staff to work in new provisions is really important
Sufficiency strategy consultation

We would like to be kept informed more
PCF survey SEND inspection 2020



If transport is late or noisy it can be stressful.
Young person. 2017

Some teachers in mainstream schools don't understand us.
Young person. 2017

Since the development of the SEND Strategy 2017 to 2020, the Parent Carer Forum has become established and provides on-going feedback from families on their experiences of having a child or young person with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability into the SEND & Inclusion Board. This has helped to keep the SEND & Inclusion Board informed as to on the ground feelings towards service delivery.

In addition, a number of consultations have recently taken place with parents and carers to inform the local area on specific issues and developments:

- In response to the increasing demand for specialist provision, a sufficiency strategy has been developed with the aim to increase the number of places for children and young people with Communication & Interaction (primarily Autistic Spectrum Condition) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs across the local area. A consultation took place on the new provision which included: an online survey, 5 locality events open to all, 7 workshops with children and young people, 1 focus group with parents and carers. This provided information on what the provision should look like and be resourced.
- Adult and Community Services carried out a questionnaire around information and advice for preparing for adulthood during 2019.
- The local area in Leicestershire had a SEND inspection in February 2020. To enhance the webinar information and the meeting with parents/carers, the Parent Carer Forum conducted a survey with parent and carers to provide further information to the inspection team. The survey consisted of service satisfaction questions and specific questions on key areas that the Parent Carer have reported to the SEND & Inclusion Board: SEN Transport, EHCP's and the Local Offer.
- The development of the neurodevelopmental improvement programme for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Information from children and young people has been collected from their respective Youth Group leaders, identifying the key themes that are discussed during the groups. The young people that attend these groups will have an SEN support plan or an EHCP and will be in mainstream or specialist schools. Information was also received from a session held with the Youth Advisory Group.

Key themes from recent consultations to inform the refreshed key priorities

Ensure mainstream schools are equipped to meet needs

Parents and carers raised concerns about the training staff in mainstream schools receive to equip them to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs. They don't feel that they have sufficient knowledge about the different conditions and are not fully able to support needs. Children and young people in 2017, and again in 2020, also spoke about their concerns at being within a mainstream school and the consequences of staff not understanding SEN conditions: being segregated from their classmates when not able to cope with a busy classroom, consequences

/ punishments for SEN related behaviours, low attendance at school and leaving school without any provision to move into. The young people would like to see better training for teachers in mental health to identify the early warning signs.

Positive responses were received on support and help in our area Special Schools.

Strengthen the voice of parents and carers

Parents and carers would like to see an improvement in the communication between families and services, and between services. They would like to be treated as experts in their child's needs. This particularly relates to the Education Health and Care Plan process. The SEND & Inclusion Board continues to work with the Parent Carer Forum to strengthen the voice of parents and carers, and children and young people, at a strategic level, to support the development of services at an earlier stage which reflect the needs of the families who will be accessing those services.

Accessible communication

Children and young people with SEND have reported that they would like any information and guidance to be in an accessible format for children and young people with SEND, including in Braille and sign language.

Local provision

A key theme being reported by parents and carers and young people is being able to attend an appropriate school placement. Schools not being able to meet need was reported as an issue by parents and carers. Young people reported that they were struggling in a mainstream school with some on reduced timetables.

Parents / carers, children and young people have been concerned about the length of time travelling to specialist schools. The increase in demand for specialist placements has increased the reliance on independent placements which may not be within the local community and increasing travel time.

SEN transport for young people can involve being taken to school in an overcrowded taxi and communication issues, e.g. not being able to have a conversation with the driver/escort.

Put the child at the heart of decision making

Parents and carers have been concerned that their child or young person is not getting the right support that they need due to putting cost and/or resources available first. This applied to bringing in experts, provision and equipment in schools; offer for a school placement, Short Breaks and preparation for adulthood. Young people reported that they do not achieve positive friendships or the social interaction that they would like to have.

Joint working across education, health and care

Parents and carers do not feel that there is good joint working between education, health and care services as well as across children's and adult services. This is particularly the case when there is more than one agency commissioning a placement. When there is satisfaction, this is down to an individual being proactive in making the links to services and often referring on behalf of the family.

Access to services

Parents and carers reported that waiting times are an area of dissatisfaction. There are very long waits once a referral has been made to an initial appointment, and between appointments. Parents and carers also report that it takes a long time to be able to receive a diagnosis. Parents and carers reported that more information needs to be made available whilst waiting for an assessment / diagnosis. It would also help parents, once a diagnosis has been made, to provide information on the condition. Parents and carers also would like more information on the pathways to access a service and what is available once a case has been closed to a service. This includes what services are available for children and young people as they enter adulthood.

7. The High Needs Development Plan

The High Needs Development Plan was established in recognition of the rising demand for SEN support and provision in Leicestershire alongside the ambition to provide early support to all children, maximising their potential within an appropriate local setting.

The plan has four key strands:

- Development of Inclusion and Education Quality Offer
- SEND Strategy, Commissioning and Funding
- SEND Systems Review
- Sufficiency Programme

Development of inclusion and education quality offer

This strand of the plan focuses on strengthening Leicestershire's local offer prior to a formal need being identified. The Local Authority has invested in additional resources to further strengthen the graduated response across all settings, as well as developing an Inclusion Service which provides schools and parents and carers with advice and support and acts as a 'triage' for internal and external services.

The Inclusion and SENA Service will be working with schools across the graduated response pathway, ensuring needs are identified and addressed early, with a focus on meeting outcomes. The Inclusion Service focuses on early identification of need and tracking the progress of children at regular points to ensure appropriate support is being provided by the local area. The service aims to provide effective and consistent assessments in order to refer to the most appropriate services and support across the continuum of need to ensure that timely, suitable support is identified for children and/or their families.

SEND strategy, commissioning and funding

To ensure that there is consistency across the local area, this strand focuses on ensuring that our key policies and strategies are proportionate with the needs of the local area and that proactive support mechanisms are in place to ensure that the local area is supported in applying these. This strand is developing:

- i. Best endeavours and reasonable adjustments guidance for all settings
- ii. SEND handbooks to roll out across the whole sector
- iii. SEND and Inclusion Strategy (2020/2023)
- iv. Re-design of the Neuro-development Pathway
- v. Review of the funding framework (including the best use of top-up funding)
- vi. Whole school quality and outcome reviews
- vii. Joint Commissioning Strategy
- viii. Strengthening the relationship between Children's and Adults Strategic Commissioning

SEND systems review (operational Local Authority services review)

Work is planned throughout 2020 to enhance operational practice and the operating model across our SEN and Inclusion Services to ensure consistent, effective practice is developed and deployed across the local area. Work has begun with the SENA service to explore improvements in its service offer that will ensure consistency and parity of decision making – ensuring it is multi-agency in nature.

We have carried out extensive performance and data analysis which has identified opportunities for improvement. Plans are in place to re-design key processes within and led by the SENA service, putting in place a joint approach with health and social care to ensure consistency and robustness across assessment, decision-making and reviews.

Sufficiency programme

The demand for SEND provision continues to grow and through the needs identified in the SEND Strategy and the Local Authority's planning and sufficiency forecasting in 2018 the need for additional capacity was identified. To meet the need within an inclusive education system, an ambitious programme has been established to develop provision across the local area. A specific need identified was for places for pupils with Communication and Interaction (primarily Autism Spectrum Condition) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The programme is supporting the expansion of existing special schools, with Menphys Specialist Nursery supporting children at risk of exclusion, the further development of resource bases in mainstream schools and a pre-school to further promote inclusion, and the longer-term development of new schools.

Following a positive public consultation outcome during the spring of 2019 on the rising demand and need for further local sufficiency, 88% of responses from that consultation were in strong agreement or tending to agree with the local area's overall sufficiency proposals. Our plans involve the development of at least 731 places over the next 3 years.

The programme is working to ensure that the right contractual arrangements are in place with all of our provisions and Service Level Agreements (SLA's) are developed and/renewed over the next 4 months. These SLA's are vital to the development of Leicestershire's SEN provision as these agreements set out our expectations for children and young people attending each provision, and the responsibility of the Local Authority and each provider to ensure improved outcomes, whilst ensuring value for money is achieved.

8. How will we achieve the priorities?

Co-production

Description of priority area

A strand that will run throughout the strategy will be co-production with parents, carers, children and young people. Work is developing with Leicestershire's Parent Carer Forum to provide the parental steer for the strategic work that is taking place. Services will continue to develop approaches that ensure we meet the standards of co-production and person-centred reviews, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice and use these to influence the work prior to SEND being identified.

Priority 1 - To identify and meet children's special educational needs as early as possible.

Description of priority area

This priority considers how pre-school settings and mainstream schools work with parents/carers and appropriate professionals to understand and identify the needs of children and young people as early as possible. The priority focuses on supporting inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning. There are links with Priority 5: Workforce Development, so that across the partnership we can ensure that our staff are knowledgeable about the needs of children and young people with SEND and what the Local Offer can provide in supporting families. Professionals will also need to follow the graduated response and know when and how to seek and coordinate multi-agency support at the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support Stage or, when necessary, through an Education, Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment.

The local area SEND inspection identified that the Education, Health and Care Plan process was a serious weakness and is an action within the Written Statement of Action.

Within this priority, there will be links to:

- Develop integrated two-year checks to ensure early identification, reinforced through joint working with health agencies and clear processes around section 23 notifications (health and the local authority)
- Initial health assessments for children in care with SEND to be carried out in a timely manner
- The legal requirements of schools, local authority and health services through the development of a SEN Handbook
- Development of the Inclusion Service in supporting schools, parents and carers and professionals working with children and young people with SEND, particularly identification of SEN and SEN Support
- Sharing information between the local authority and health services for young people that are not in education, employment or training, and with the School Nursing service for children and young people with SEND that are Electively Home Educated
- Improving the quality of Education, Health and Care plans
- Developing the Education, Health and Care Plan process and Annual Reviews both within the local authority and between the local authority (education and care), clinical commissioning group and provider services
- Offer of support and training to schools and settings without the need for an EHCP

- Better use of information management systems, data quality and using performance information
- Development of the Local Offer

What will this mean for you?

That all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and their families will be able to access the information, advice and support they need at the right time to live as independently as possible.

Children and young people in settings and schools will have competent and knowledgeable staff to support them. Their needs will be identified as early as possible with their needs being met at the lowest level, ensuring provision is in place to meet their needs and to enable outcomes to be achieved.

Priority 2 - Responsive, inclusive and effective provision for all children and young people with SEND.

Description of priority area

This priority area includes sufficiency (ensuring enough specialist school places to meet identified and projected need), the 'outward looking' role of special schools and resourced provisions – how they work alongside other services to support opportunities for inclusion within a mainstream setting and the wider services available to support provision at SEN Support and EHCP stage. This requires the local area to work together to understand the scale of need for provision, e.g. therapy support, and to have the right level of services available to our schools, to support progress to meet our children and young people's outcomes.

Areas that will be considered under this priority include:

- SEN funding
- The role of Special Schools and resourced provisions in supporting effective inclusion across their locality
- Increase of SEN provision across Leicestershire (Sufficiency)
- Short Breaks and Day Care
- SEN Transport – access and application
- Youth Offending service having direct access to Speech and Language Therapy

What will this mean for you?

The most appropriate provision for your child or young person will be local, well resourced and have appropriate access to transport, if required. If your child or young person is requiring support with social aspects of their development, then Short Breaks to best meet need will be available.

Priority 3 - Understanding and preparation for change (Transitions)

Description of priority area

This priority area includes any occasion when a child or young person experiences a transition. These will include the traditional movement times between schools, but also other aspects of moves when the need arises, e.g. mainstream to special school outside of end of key stage move, special school to mainstream school or when house moves are required mid-term.

The specific focus will include:

- Change from home to a setting, school or college
- Changes to educational provision during any point in the school year, as well as at transition points (ages 5, 11 and 16)
- Transition at key education transition points and from child to adult health services and social care support
- Preparation for Adulthood and destination opportunities, e.g. internships
- Continued development of pathways and continuum of service for families of children and young people with SEND

What will this mean for you?

When your child or young person needs move to a different provision or service, this will have been done in a timely manner with the appropriate information being made available so that needs are well understood. As a parent or carer, you will feel confident about the transition arrangements. Plans will reflect these changes and ensure preparation for adulthood.

Priority 4 - Strategic partnerships, joint working, joint commissioning and consultation

Description of priority area

A key area within the 2014 SEND reforms is to bring together education, health and care to jointly commission services. To promote wellbeing and improve the quality of provision for disabled children and young people with SEND, close co-operation with education, health and care partners is required to research, plan and commission services to meet current and future needs.

The local area SEND inspection identified joint commissioning as a serious weakness and is a key action area within the Written Statement of Action. As part of this priority, these areas will be developed:

- Updating our Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children and Young People with SEND
- Develop a joint commissioning strategy between the Local Authority and health services to provide more joined up services to children and families
- Strengthening the relationship between Children and Family Services & Adult Social Care Strategic Commissioning

- Development of a joint outcomes framework for health and local authority outcomes data, reported to the SEND & Inclusion Board
- Recording of health outcomes to inform joint commissioning decisions, reported through the joint outcomes framework
- Development of the neurodevelopmental pathway
- Ensuring that children, young people and their parents/carers are fully engaged in co-design and development of services
- Ensuring full engagement across all agencies, including pre-school providers, schools, FE Colleges and local employers.
- SEND Quality Assurance & Learning Framework

What will this mean for you?

Children, young people and their families will experience a more co-ordinated approach – accessing the right service at the right time.

Priority 5 - Develop the workforce

Description of priority area

Parent/Carer feedback identified that it makes a great deal of difference to the potential for a child or young person to reach their potential, if professionals understand their needs. There are a number of services across the Education, Health and Care sectors that are guiding, providing information and/or delivering training on aspects of SEND. However, this work is currently not co-ordinated across the partnership.

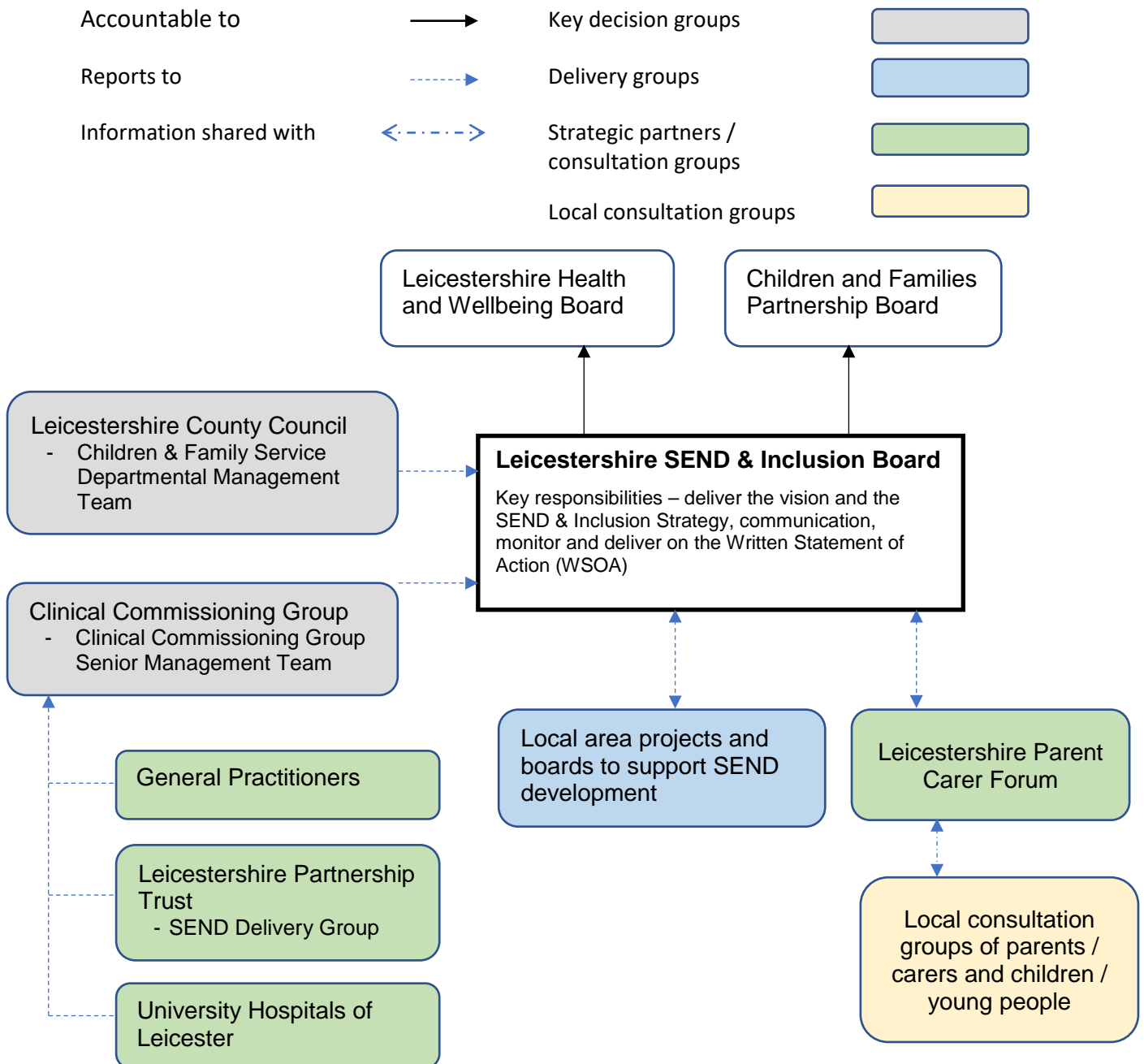
As part of the development of the priority area we will work on the following:

- Develop a SEND Workforce handbook that maps availability of training and support across the local area, working with key policy areas, e.g. learning disability, autism, etc.
- Access to appropriate specialist health support for those children and young people with the most complex needs, particularly in the early years
- Analysis of workforce development areas identified through the Whole School SEN Review
- Use of lessons learned to promote best practice for remote training when operating under Covid-19 guidelines
- Opportunities for joint / shared training on cross-cutting areas

What will this mean for you?

As parents and carers, you will feel confident that all professionals know, understand and will support the needs of your child or young person to enable them to reach their potential and meet identified outcomes.

9. Governance



10.Action Plan

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	PRIORITY 1: To identify and meet children's special educational needs as early as possible.					
1.1	Integrated two-year old checks: Identify needs at an early age, reinforced through joint working with agencies in a timely manner, to provide the additional resources to reduce more complex needs developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant assessments completed by statutory services ▪ Timeliness of reports 	Priority 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised process for the two-year check is in place across health and Early Years providers. • Parents are clear if their child is at risk of delay • A published pathway of support which includes health, education and Children and Family Wellbeing Services for parents and carers • Number of section 23 referrals increases for children identified at risk of delay at two-year check 	April 2021
1.2	Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Handbook: Easily accessible information, advice and guidance for any professional working with children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best Endeavours & Reasonable Adjustments ▪ The legal framework ▪ Local Offer 	Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Needs Block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in requests for an Education Health and Plan Needs Assessment (assessed & decision made) 	Sept 2020
1.3	Inclusion Service development: Providing the support and guidance to carry out the legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusion pathway and services 	Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Needs Block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children and young people discussed within the forums and which of these 	October 2020

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	requirements to ensure all our children and young people are in education.	<p>developed and communicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Inclusion Forums across each locality to support staff in schools to provide a shared responsibility to supporting the graduated response 			<p>progress to other services and which leave the forums with a plan to be supported by schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of children and young people on a SEN support plan / Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that receive support through the Inclusion Service leading to a pathway into education Reduction in declined EHCP requests 	
1.4	Local area services response to the need for providing support to children and young people identified as having SEND at the earliest opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the work of Local Authority appointed Graduated Response Inclusion Practitioners Local Authority services change of criteria to offer free services to schools to support the graduated response 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in requests for an Education Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment (assessed & decision made) 	On-going
1.5	Co-produce a Countywide Local Area joint SEND data and quality-dashboard, which includes qualitative and quantitative information to ensure we use feedback to drive change, improve services based on the JSNA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish partnership data monitoring group Identify the key performance indicators across education, health and care Develop a process for gathering indicator 			Data drives the evidence base for updating the Board on key actions to be taken	December 2020

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		<p>information from different services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a format and schedule for reporting - Key indicators indicate detailed analysis required - Assessing need and future impact to gather additional vulnerable group information, e.g. adopted children and those that are no longer looked after 				
1.6	<p>Information sharing between the local authority and health services, including the School Nursing service:</p> <p>Data sharing protocol and process in place to regularly share information on those children and young people with SEND that are Electively Home Educated (EHE) and those not in education, employment or training to ensure that their health needs are being met and the appropriate support is in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data sharing protocol in place and Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) receive and record educational status for children and young people who are EHE or missing education / home tuition ▪ Data sharing process in place – this will need to consider the incompatibility of Information Management Systems and the lack of NHS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure routine data transfer processes to quality assure SEND data, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups, i.e. Elective Home Education, Children with Medical Needs, Not in Employment or Education and Youth Offending cohorts • All records of children and young people with SEND that are EHE or missing education show that this is the case • Contact is made with all children and young people with SEND to make them aware of the universal public health offer 	Dec 2020

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		<p>numbers to support an automated electronic upload into LPT datasets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of other vulnerable groups to be considered as part of the keeping in touch process, e.g. accessing hospital school, missing education. 				
1.7	<p>Use of health information management system:</p> <p>All health staff responsible for flagging SEND children and young people to ensure the needs of children and young people with SEND can be met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data cleansing to take place with data from the local authority Process in place to flag children and young people as SEND 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately report the number of children and young people identified as SEND with active / dormant support in place 	On-going
1.8	<p>Special Educational Needs Assessment Service Review:</p> <p>To develop more efficient SEND systems processes to improve the experiences for children and young people and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests to assess Consistency of decision making – review of panels to include and additional panel at the decision to assess stage to include education, health and care representation 	<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Priority 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Needs Block SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in requests for an Education Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment (assessed & decision made) Reduction in new plans ((EHCPs) SEN2 return) Reduction in complaints on customer care Staff retention and satisfaction Satisfaction with experience of SENA. 	<p>July 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EHCP development to include the drawing up of EHC plans ▪ Annual Reviews 				
1.9	Systemic weakness in the quality of EHC plans, including: the inaccuracy with which the plans reflect children and young people's needs; the absence of good-quality outcomes in EHC plans; the inconsistency with which plans include contributions from education and particularly health (health information omitted from EHC plans) and care professionals; out-of-date assessments included within plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance published on what a good EHCP should look like ▪ Outcomes training for education, health and care staff made available 	Priority 2 Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEND inspection Written Statement of Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of EHCP's ▪ Satisfaction of parents and carers – complaints data and Annual Review 	Sept 2020
1.10	Initial health assessments for children in care with SEND: All children in care receive an initial health assessment to ensure their health needs are met at the earliest opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social workers are aware of the process once a child and young person has come into care that an appointment needs to be booked with health 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the number of Initial health assessments booked within 48 hours of the young person coming into care 	On-going
1.11	Recording of primary need (Moderate Learning Difficulty): An agreed approach to the definitions of SEND primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the use of the primary need data to prioritise the use of School Census code or SEND Code of 		SEND Inspection action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in number of primary needs showing as blank ▪ Reduction in primary need recorded as Moderate Learning Difficulty 	April 2021

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	need between education settings and the LA	<p>practice codes for primary needs in SEND sufficiency and for joint commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rules for taking through primary need are defined All pupils recorded as having an EHCP or SEN Support have a primary need recorded Guidance on identifying primary need 				
1.12	<p>Local Offer:</p> <p>For all children and young people with special educational needs and their families to be able to access the information and support they need at the right time in Leicestershire, so they can live their lives as independently as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with parent carer groups and young people Ensure that adult services, especially those that can work with children before the age of 18, are included Ensure wide publicity of the Local Offer Increase service user engagement with Leicestershire's Local Offer. Ensure comprehensive, up to 	<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Priority 3</p> <p>Priority 4</p>	Local Offer Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey results showing an increase in satisfaction of the Local Offer content – Did you find the information that you were searching for on the Local Offer website? 49% responded yes, 44% responded no (baseline taken from PCF survey February 2020) Google analytics provides information on the user journey across the Local Offer. The bounce rate is the number of times a user has landed on a page and then come out of the site: the target is for bounce rate is 29%. Bounce rate for April 2020 	On-going

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		date and relevant information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Local Offer is accessible in communities 			was 29% and for the period from January to May 2020, was 32%. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google analytics demonstrates an increase in use of the Local Offer: 48% new users and 52% previous users (taken from Google Analytics period 1st to 30th April 2020) 	
	Priority 2: Responsive, inclusive and effective provision for all children and young people with SEND.					
2.1	SEN funding: Ensuring a balanced and consistent funding offer in supporting educational provisions to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of processes to enable consistent funding decisions are made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of when to use Top-up funding - Establishment of Education, Health and Care Panels to discuss content and provision prior to issue - Roll-out of Further Education funding formula 	Priority 1 Priority 4	High Needs Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in complaints with regards to provision 	Dec 20
2.2	The role of Special Schools and resourced provisions in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the process for collating workforce 	Priority 5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents report satisfaction of professionals' knowledge of their child 	Sept 2021

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	supporting effective inclusion across their locality: Ensuring all staff working with children and young people with SEND have the right training and qualifications to meet needs	development needs and agree a work programme to support schools				
2.3	Sufficiency development: To improve the quality and sufficiency of SEND education provision, with a particular focus on Communication & Interaction (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) services by supporting mainstream schools and settings to develop their SEND provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new schools, resource bases in mainstream schools and expansion of existing special schools to meet emerging needs for SEND pupils. Develop Service Level Agreements for new provisions, and refresh those for all existing provisions Develop systems for the placement of pupils into new provisions Develop systems for the forecasting of pupil places/demand based on primary need and locality factors. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Needs Block SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient places available to meet all SEND needs at the time required and in the right localities. Robust capital plan in place for the future development of SEND provisions Good legal agreements in place to ensure consistent operational practice, and clear understanding of accountabilities for all types of provision. Systems developed to ensure good understanding of future demands for places Improved financial position and more effective use of HNB budget through the development of local provisions and reduced dependence on ISP's 	On-going

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
2.4	Short Breaks: To co-produce streamlined and efficient processes which support the needs of families. As a consequence of the review, to update the LCC Short Breaks Statement and ensure transparency of criteria and process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To convene a partnership group to oversee activity, including Parents and Carers, health, and Children and Family Services ▪ To involve parents, carers and young people via focus groups and other approaches ▪ To publish updated guidance, criteria and standards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers understand the criteria and process for short breaks. • Short breaks are delivered with maximum efficiency • The number of new referrals accepted as a % of the total number receiving a Short Break 	Dec 2021
2.5	SEN Transport: To ensure that children and young people requiring transport have their needs catered for and receive an excellent service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuing to work with the Parent Carer Forum to work on issues raised by parents and carers: ▪ SEN Transport Policy ▪ Personal Transport Budget 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent / carer satisfaction with the process of applying for transport • Parent/carers satisfaction with details and information about allocated transport received • Parent/carers satisfaction with the timeliness of response 	On-going as influenced by policy changes
2.6	Direct access to SALT services for young people within the Youth Offending service: National research indicates that up to 92% of young people who enter the criminal justice system have difficulties with language and communication, and a further 90% of these needs are previously unidentified. Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness raising/training around Speech & Language communication need (SLCN) and introduction of ClearCut Communication resources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff attending training and integrating SCLN within assessments ▪ Increased referrals to SLT and children and young people supported to engage in appointments. ▪ Good quality AssetPlus with focus on SCLN and plans that support the identification of needs. 	<p>End of December 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	identification and access to the appropriate resources to support needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of the SCLN assessment to bolster AssetPlus to identify needs. Quality Assurance – SCLN integration into AssetPlus and tracking onward journey and impact where applicable. Documents for children and young people to be reviewed with a Child First approach and plain language. (Implementation of ClearCut Resources) Monitoring number of referrals to SLT. Strategic - Explore the opportunity to engage the Youth Justice Service and develop a pathway for young people who are diverted or involved with Youth Justice. This would include learning from other Youth Offending Teams who have 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and their parents are able to understand and explain the content of communications. Children engaging in SLT Services and receiving support appropriate to their needs. A relationship between SLT and Youth Justice focused on improving outcomes for children and young people and developing practice. 	<p>End of February 2021</p> <p>End of September 2020 (might be delayed by Covid-19)</p> <p>End of August 2020</p> <p>End of March 2021</p>

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		seconded/embedded SLT.				
	PRIORITY 3: Understanding and preparation for change (Transitions)					
3.1	Transition to Adult Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collation of data to prioritise cases ▪ Allocation of young people with the most complex level of need or risk at or before age 17 ½ years (RED rag rated) ▪ Transition plan to be in place and collaborative working underway at least 6 months prior to 18th Birthday ▪ Information advice and guidance to be provided from Year 9 ▪ Develop process and practice across Adult and Children's services to support positive Transition to Adult Services 	Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing for Adulthood Protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from young people and carers about their lived experience of Transition to Adulthood • Average / median age complex/high risk cases are allocated (RED rag rated) • Effectiveness of the Transitions team to sign post / identify community or voluntary support rather than commissioned care 	Ongoing Ongoing March 2022 March 2021 Ongoing
3.2	Preparation for Adulthood and destination opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools and colleges will use Transition Pathway advice and 	Priorities 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing for Adulthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age at which children have their first Care Act Assessment 	Dec 2021

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	Providing a clear pathway for young people, with clear transition points, both at the point of entry to college / FE and at the point of exit into adult-life	<p>guidance to structure the transition process from year 9 onwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools and college to liaise with each other to map post 16 curricula to aid transition and college readiness. ▪ Collaborative working between Children & Family Services, Education, Health and Adult Social Care to identify those children most likely to require social care support when they reach adulthood ▪ Develop the health and social care market so that there are regulated services available that can support people both in childhood and when adults (dual registration) 		<p>Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole Life Disability Strategy ▪ Transforming Care Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from young people and families • Number of children and young people in mental-health inpatient facilities 	
3.3	Pathways and continuum of service: Our children and young people and their families experience a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waiting times for CAMHS, Community Paediatrics and SaLT 	Priority 1 Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with experience of services 	On-going

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
	timely and co-ordinated service, with an understanding of the support that is available to them at any point in time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathways provide smooth hand-over between services and agencies – to be considered when developing services Parents and carers understand the roles and responsibilities between different services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole life disability strategy 	(baseline taken from Parent Carer Survey February 2020 – specific to individual services) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in early years receiving a new plan (EHCP) – 156 under 5's (baseline taken from January 2020 SEN2 return) 	
	PRIORITY 4: Strategic partnerships, joint working, joint commissioning and consultation					
4.1	Joint Commissioning Strategy: Develop a joint commissioning strategy to provide the right services at the right time to our children and young people with SEND, and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a task and finish group to develop the joint commissioning strategy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and Partnership Plan SEND Inspection Written Statement of Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A joint commissioning strategy is agreed across the local area 	April 2021
4.2	Recording of health outcomes to inform commissioning decisions: Health information management system are configured to record health outcomes for reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the health information management system to record and monitor progress towards health outcomes Health services Annual Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Assurance and Learning Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of health's information management system for recording health outcomes 	Dec 2020 Sept 2020

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
		template available within the information management system to support better quality information to be included within EHCP's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance of written health outcomes 				
4.3	SEND Assurance & Learning Framework: A shared framework across all agencies within the local area to ensure services are compliant with the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and evaluate information, advice and guidance; response to identification; quality and consistency of practice; quality and consistency of plans and decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a task and finish group to develop a proposed framework Establish a quality assurance steering group to implement and monitor activity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality of EHCP's Moderation meetings take place and actions recorded and monitored Number of audits carried out with outcome 	Process begins September 2020
4.4	Co-production between the local authority, health and parents and carers and children and young people: The strategic development of the SEND reforms is informed by the Parent and Carer Forum and by the families that use our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parent Carer is the strategic partner working with the SEND & Inclusion Board to ensure the voice of parents and carers informs the strategic development of services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Inspection Written Statement of Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with experience of services 	On-going

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
4.5	Transition from paediatric health services to adult services. Use of transitional health assessments to inform holistic approach to care and commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the local offer and local area services have information in clear accessible formats for children and young people and their parents / carers Services develop transitions standard operating procedures 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of transitional health assessments carried out Parents and carers show increase satisfaction with transition into adult health services 	Apr 2021
4.6	Neurodevelopmental pathway: A streamlined service to improve outcomes of children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) by identifying the resources committed to their diagnosis and care, agreeing opportunities for improvement and implementing new delivery, finance and workforce models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project established to develop the Neurodevelopmental Improvement Programme 	Priority 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Inspection LLR ND Transformation Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathway is published on the Local Offer Waiting times for assessment are reduced ASD services are provided during assessment and post diagnosis 	Dec 2021
PRIORITY 5: Develop the workforce						

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
5.1	SEND Workforce Handbook: Information, advice and guidance on the support and training available for all professionals working with children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map out guidance, support and training available across the local area for education, health and care 	Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Needs Block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with staff confidence in primary needs 	September 2020
5.2	Access to appropriate specialist health support: Early years settings and schools have the support and training to meet the needs of children and young people with complex health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure settings have information and are aware of how to access health training through Children's Community Nursing Teams, Speech and Language Therapy and specialist services at UHL 	Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Inspection action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with staff confidence in primary needs 	Dec 2020
5.3	Ensure staff are aware of the Leicestershire Local Offer, their legal duties and Leicestershire approach to SEND and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction training to include the Leicestershire approach to Inclusion and SEND E-learning package for LPT staff to embed the legal framework for SEND and the statutory responsibilities for health staff 	Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCC Children and Family Services Workforce Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the access of the Local Offer Reduction in EHCP's 	On-going Aug 2021

Ref	Key aims	Actions	Links to priority	Links to development plan	Measure of success	Timeline
5.4	Key activities carried out within and across schools that identify workforce development gaps are reported centrally and a co-ordinated/joint response can be offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of Whole School SEN Reviews to identify gaps in training across schools ▪ Co-ordinated training offered by the School Nursing team, Educational Psychology and the Virtual School 	Priority 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers show increase satisfaction with professionals knowledge and experience 	March 2021

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Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA)

This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) will enable you to assess the **new, proposed or significantly changed** policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service** for equality and human rights implications.

Undertaking this assessment will help you to identify whether or not this policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service** may have an adverse impact on a particular community or group of people. It will ultimately ensure that, as an Authority, we do not discriminate and we are able to promote equality, diversity and human rights.

Please refer to the EHRIA [guidance](#) before completing this form. If you need any further information about undertaking and completing the assessment, contact your [Departmental Equalities Group](#) or equality@leics.gov.uk

***Please note: The term 'policy' will be used throughout this assessment as shorthand for policy, practice, procedure, function or service.*

Key Details	
Name of policy being assessed:	SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board Strategy 2020 to 2023
Department and section:	Children and Families Department
Name of lead officer/ job title and others completing this assessment:	Caroline Davis (SEND Partnerships, Quality and Projects Officer)
Contact telephone numbers:	0116 305 5858
Name of officer/s responsible for implementing this policy:	SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board members
Date EHRIA assessment started:	28 th February 2020
Date EHRIA assessment completed:	2 nd March 2020

Section 1: Defining the policy

Section 1: Defining the policy

You should begin this assessment by defining and outlining the scope of the policy. You should consider the impact or likely impact of the policy in relation to all areas of equality, diversity and human rights as outlined in Leicestershire County Council's [Equality Strategy](#).

1	<p>What is new or changed in the policy? <i>What has changed and why?</i></p> <p>The Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Partnership Strategy has been in place from 2017 to 2020. Developments have taken place over the length of the strategy to meet the needs of those children and young people identified as having Special Educational Needs. It has been agreed that it is now appropriate to broaden the responsibility of the SEND Board to include Inclusion. Helping children and young people that have special educational needs requires lots of different people supporting at the earliest point.</p> <p>The SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2020 to 2023 is a plan to help bring together the work of a number of agencies like, the local authority, health, Parent Carer Forum, Early Years settings, schools and colleges across Leicestershire to ensure that services work together in the best possible way to support children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 to achieve the best possible outcomes.</p> <p>There are now five priorities that include:</p> <p>Priority 1 - To identify and meet children's special educational needs as early as possible.</p> <p>Priority 2 – Responsive, inclusive and effective provision for all children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>Priority 3 – Understanding and preparation for change (Transitions)</p> <p>Priority 4 - Strategic partnerships, joint working, joint commissioning and consultation</p> <p>Priority 5 - Develop the workforce</p> <p>Priority 1 and priority 4 will include those areas that the SEND inspection felt were of a cause for concern and require a Written Statement of Action to be monitored.</p>
2	<p>Does this relate to any other policy within your department, the Council or with other partner organisations? <i>If yes, please reference the relevant policy or EHRIA. If unknown, further investigation may be required.</i></p> <p>The SEND & Inclusion Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is evidence-based taking the recommendations for action from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA is currently being reviewed. As the JSNA also underpins the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, there will be direct links. - links in to the Children and Families Partnership Board Plan, particularly in relation to Joint Commissioning. - will deliver on aspects of the Children and Families Departmental Plan. - links in with the SEND Transport Policy - links in with the Adult and Communities Department Strategy and Ambitions

	2020 to 2024														
3	<p>Who are the people/ groups (target groups) affected and what is the intended change or outcome for them?</p> <p>The strategy is aimed at children and young people and their families that have a Special Educational Needs and/or have a Disability (SEND) aged 0-25 years.</p> <p>Background information for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire</p> <p>There are approximately 290,231 children and young people living in Leicestershire aged 0-25 years. This represents 30.3% of the total population of Leicestershire.</p> <p>The Department for Education receives each year, from each Local Authority, numbers of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan. As this information is taken from a large number of authorities, it takes until June each year before the information is published so that we can see how we do against national and regional figures. In January 2019, there were 10,872 pupils on a SEN support plan. This equates to 10.4% of the school population in Leicestershire. This is below the national average of 11.9%.</p> <p>In January 2019, there were 3304 children and young people in Leicestershire schools with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This equates to 3.2% of the school population. This is just above the national average of 3.1%. However, the local authority has a responsibility for a much higher number of Education Health and Care Plans due to our children and young people in Leicestershire that attend mainstream schools, independent schools and independent specialist schools that are outside of Leicestershire. This then increases the number of EHCPs in January 2019 to 4222.</p>														
4	<p>Will the policy meet the Equality Act 2010 requirements to have due regard to the need to meet any of the following aspects? (Please tick and explain how)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Yes</th><th>No</th><th>How?</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</td><td>Yes</td><td></td><td>All agencies/services described above in point 1 that work with children and young people with SEND have to follow what is set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014). This sets out the process for working with children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers and includes reference to the Equality Act 2010, particularly in relation to Reasonable Adjustments and Best Endeavours that settings, schools and colleges should be putting in place. The Strategy now includes the commitment to work with children and young people at the earliest point when an educational need is identified.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</td><td></td><td></td><td> <p>A change within the Children and Families Act 2014 was to replace the Statement of Educational Need to an Education Health and Care Plan, bringing together the aspects of education, health and care when impacting on education. These are to help to raise aspirations for children and young people identified with SEND.</p> <p>The increase in the age range up to the age of 25 years was to ensure that those children and young people with SEND had the opportunity to have additional time to achieve the same as their peers, e.g. some young people may need to stay on in education longer than up to 19 years to have the skills and qualifications that will enable them to participate in adult life.</p> <p>Within the SEND Code of Practice (2014) there is reference to preparation for adulthood. There</p> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Yes	No	How?	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes		All agencies/services described above in point 1 that work with children and young people with SEND have to follow what is set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014). This sets out the process for working with children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers and includes reference to the Equality Act 2010, particularly in relation to Reasonable Adjustments and Best Endeavours that settings, schools and colleges should be putting in place. The Strategy now includes the commitment to work with children and young people at the earliest point when an educational need is identified.	Advance equality of opportunity between different groups			<p>A change within the Children and Families Act 2014 was to replace the Statement of Educational Need to an Education Health and Care Plan, bringing together the aspects of education, health and care when impacting on education. These are to help to raise aspirations for children and young people identified with SEND.</p> <p>The increase in the age range up to the age of 25 years was to ensure that those children and young people with SEND had the opportunity to have additional time to achieve the same as their peers, e.g. some young people may need to stay on in education longer than up to 19 years to have the skills and qualifications that will enable them to participate in adult life.</p> <p>Within the SEND Code of Practice (2014) there is reference to preparation for adulthood. There</p>
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				are four independent living skill indicators that all agencies need to consider when working with young people to enable them to be prepared for adulthood.
	Foster good relations between different groups			The SEND Board has broadened their brief to ensure that all children and young people's needs are met at the lowest level. A programme of work has been set up to ensure that pupils needs can be met within mainstream education provision. It is also an aim to reduce distance travelled to an educational provision so that children and young people with SEND can be educated within their own community. Additional support is being developed through a joined-up network of services.

Section 2: Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) Screening

Section 2: Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Screening

The purpose of this section of the assessment is to help you decide if a full EHRIA is required.

If you have already identified that a full EHRIA is needed for a policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service, either via service planning processes or other means, then please go straight to Section 3 on Page 7 of this document.

Section 2

A: Research and Consultation

5.	Have the target groups been consulted about the following?	Yes	No*
	a) their current needs and aspirations and what is important to them;	Consultation for the 2017 to 2020 strategy.	
	b) any potential impact of this change on them (positive and negative, intended and unintended);	Consultation during 2018/9 took place relating to new provision	
	c) potential barriers they may face	Consultation for the 2017 to 2020 strategy.	
6.	If the target groups have not been consulted directly, have representatives been consulted or research explored (e.g. Equality Mapping)?	National research and ongoing consultations within services	
7.	Have other stakeholder groups/ secondary groups (e.g. carers of service users) been explored in terms of potential unintended impacts?	Ongoing feedback from the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum reported into the SEND & Inclusion Board (standing item)	
8.	*If you answered 'no' to the questions above, please use the space below to outline either what consultation you are planning to undertake or why you do not consider it to be necessary.		
	It is an additional priority within the SEND & Inclusion strategy to include co-production with children and young people and parents and carers. Therefore there will be regular opportunities during the time period of the strategy to continue to collect the experiences of children and young people and parents and carers to ensure that their needs are able to be met.		

Section 2**B: Monitoring Impact**

9.	Are there systems set up to:	Yes	No
	a) monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups;	As part of the ongoing monitoring of the strategy, different groups and the impact of the strategy will be considered	
	b) enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities	Ongoing feedback from the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum. Focus groups to assess impact	

Note: If no to Question 9, you will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics.

Section 2**C: Potential Impact**

10.	Use the table below to specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the ' protected characteristics ' may potentially be affected by the policy and describe any positive and negative impacts, including any barriers.			
		Yes	No	Comments
	Age	Yes		<p>Children and young people aged 0-25 are considered as part of this strategy. This requires closer working with adult services as the age range crosses the current working age boundaries between Children's and Adult Services within the Local Authority and health.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact as the Local Authority Adult Transition team has seen an increase in capacity and there are continued developments to work with Children's Services.</p>
	Disability	Yes		<p>Within the Children and Families Act 2014, children and young people with disabilities were included within the definition. The strategy includes reference to Short Breaks, whereby children and young people with a disability can access additional support throughout the year along with any additional support from the Children and Family Service.</p> <p>Recognition for the need to plan for transition throughout education transition points and transition to adult services is referred to within the Strategy.</p>

			<p>Implementation of the strategy will reduce the barriers faced by children with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>Consideration that the First-Tier SEND Tribunal considers cases of disability discrimination in addition to those associated with an Education, Health and Care Plan.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact as there is work planned to remodel the Short Break offer and Local Authority Adult Transition team has seen an increase in capacity and there are continued developments to work with Children's Services.</p>
	Gender Reassignment	Yes	<p>There is a neutral impact on Gender reassignment within the SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board strategy. However, considerations will be given to those young people stating gender reassignment within their SEND Needs.</p>
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes	<p>There is a neutral impact on marriage or civil partnerships.</p>
	Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	<p>There is a neutral impact on pregnancy or maternity. However, individual circumstances would be assessed within their SEND needs.</p>
	Race	Yes	<p>There is a neutral impact on race, but considerations are given to those young people's race within their SEND Needs.</p> <p>An example would be that Leicestershire does have a large population of Gypsy/Roma. However, the data is not readily available. The strategy does include work bring together more information on our children and young people.</p>
	Religion or Belief	Yes	<p>There is a neutral impact on religion or belief, but considerations are given to those young people's religion or belief within their SEND Needs.</p>
	Sex	Yes	<p>The statistics point to more males being identified as having SEND needs than females. However, as further research is undertaken, different gender groups can show SEND in different ways, e.g. girls have been considered to be less likely to be autistic, but new research is showing that girls are more likely to mask their autism at school but present very different in the home environment.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact as the strategy includes a priority on workforce development.</p>
	Sexual Orientation	Yes	<p>The strategy has a positive impact on sexual orientation with the increase of specialist provision across the county and the development of the Inclusion</p>

				service that directly supports and guides schools.
	Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	Yes		<p>Schools in deprived areas (according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)) are more likely to have higher numbers of children and young people with SEND, particularly with an EHCP. Some of the new provision has been sited in these areas to ensure that children and young people with SEND do not have to travel longer distances than their peers.</p> <p>Looked After Children educational needs are overseen in Leicestershire by The Virtual School. Processes within Social Care and Education should be aligned for these children and young people to ensure that needs are being met. This should also apply to those children and young people on a Child Protection Plan and Child in Need plan.</p> <p>The specific primary needs of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Social, Emotional and Mental Health are being met with new provision being developed on current mainstream school sites, including new build.</p> <p>There are a significant number of children and young people within the SEND cohort that will have health needs. Therefore they are more at risk of health inequalities. The strategy seeks to address these needs.</p>
	Community Cohesion			There are a significant number of children and young people who may experience difficulties in accessing community activities or experience a misunderstanding of their behaviours. This strategy seeks to support children and young people to participate fully in community life through increasing specialist educational provision across the localities.
11.	<p>Are the human rights of individuals <i>potentially</i> affected by this proposal? Could there be an impact on human rights for any of the protected characteristics? (Please tick)</p> <p>Explain why you consider that any particular article in the Human Rights Act may apply to the policy/ practice/ function or procedure and how the human rights of individuals are likely to be affected below: [NB: include positive and negative impacts as well as barriers in benefiting from the above proposal]</p>			
		Yes	No	Comments
Part 1: The Convention- Rights and Freedoms				

Article 2: Right to life	Yes		There are children and young people identified with SEND that will have life-limiting conditions. Consideration will be given through the Education Health and Care Plan to ensure that children and young people can participate as fully as possible in all aspects of life.
Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way	Yes		Within the SEND cohort, there are a significant number of children and young people who require personal care and could potentially be placed in a safeguarding position due to the nature of their needs by accessing commissioned services. The strategy has been developed to ensure that all children and young people are treated with respect.
Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/ forced labour			
Article 5: Right to liberty and security			
Article 6: Right to a fair trial			
Article 7: No punishment without law			
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life	Yes		The work within the strategy will reduce the barriers faced by children with disabilities and their families and therefore improve family life, e.g. through working with families on support at home, Short Breaks and Respite Care.
Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion			
Article 10: Right to freedom of expression			
Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association			
Article 12: Right to marry			
Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against			
Part 2: The First Protocol			
Article 1: Protection of property/ peaceful enjoyment			
Article 2: Right to education	Yes		The work within the strategy will extend the opportunities for children and young people with SEND to access an education to meet their needs within their local community.
Article 3: Right to free elections			
Section 2			
D: Decision			

13.	Is there evidence or any other reason to suggest that: a) the policy could have a different affect or adverse impact on any section of the community; b) any section of the community may face barriers in benefiting from the proposal	Yes	No	Unknown
			No	
			No	
13.	Based on the answers to the questions above, what is the likely impact of the policy			
	No Impact <input type="checkbox"/>	Positive Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neutral Impact <input type="checkbox"/>	Negative Impact or Impact Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>
Note: If the decision is 'Negative Impact' or 'Impact Not Known', an EHRIA Report is required.				
14.	Is an EHRIA report required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Section 2: Completion of EHRIA Screening

Upon completion of the screening section of this assessment, you should have identified whether an EHRIA Report is required for further investigation of the impacts of this policy.

Option 1: If you identified that an EHRIA Report *is required*, continue to Section 3 on Page 7 of this document.

Option 2: If there are no equality, diversity or human rights impacts identified and an EHRIA report *is not required*, continue to Section 4 on Page 14 of this document.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

CHILDREN AND FAMILY WELLBEING SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) which was established in April 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Early Help Review in 2018 led to the Children's Centre Service, Supporting Leicestershire Families Service (SLF), Youth Offending Service, and Early Help Information and Assessment Service being amalgamated and formed into one Children and Family Wellbeing Service. The review also resulted in Children's Centre buildings being reduced from 36 to 21.
3. The plan to transform Targeted Early Help services was agreed by the Cabinet in July 2018, and the new service was launched in April 2019.

Background

4. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service was introduced as a result of an organisational review of targeted early help services in 2018/19. The review of early help services was driven by the need to achieve £15m savings as part of the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and impending loss of National Troubled Families grant funding.
5. In 2017 an evaluation project was undertaken in relation to Early Help services which involved analysis of 787 cases opened to the Supporting Leicestershire Families and the Children's Centre Service over a 4-year period. The findings were extremely positive as detailed in the following paragraphs.
6. It was found that 68% of families had involvement with social care prior to SLF intensive support, and this decreased to 33% of families after the case was closed to SLF intensive support workers.

7. In terms of the positive impact early help support can have on families, a family star tool, which monitors progress of families receiving one-to-one support from key workers is undertaken. Progress is charted across ten domains and families made most significant positive progress in improving boundaries and behaviour (72%), adult wellbeing (70%), social networks (65%), children's emotional needs (64%).
8. In relation to performance against national benchmarks, national Troubled Families Project funding is allocated to individual projects based on the amount of families reaching positive outcomes. The results in Leicestershire were based on the performance of intensive family support within the SLF service. At the time of the evaluation project Leicestershire was a high performing Payment by Result (PBR) local authority. During the final stages of the Early Help Review in 2018 Leicestershire had delivered positive outcomes for 1596 families, which equated to 58% of the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) target of 2770 families which was well ahead of both regional and national averages.

The Early Help Review

9. Feedback from the Early Help Review public consultation in 2018 led to subsequent service changes focusing on drawing together support work across the four internal targeted early help service areas. Fundamental to this approach was the need, which was based on research, to preserve intensive family support. A key objective of the review was to place the needs of families at the centre of restructuring services and the feedback from the public consultation favoured services being linked into and delivered with other local early help related services. This in turn led to services being restructured and teams being introduced across five localities; Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby Oadby and Wigston, North West Leicester, Charnwood, and Market Harborough and Melton.
10. To support a family centred approach to providing support to families, a number of roles were reshaped to provide a platform for practitioners to work with and support parents and children across the age range from 0 to 19 years of age. Where more specialist areas of work remained, staff were brought together across each of the localities into multi skilled teams.
11. Alongside this change a revised triage and assessment process was introduced. The change brought together all incoming referrals from across the four amalgamated services. This provided an opportunity to improve the triage process and enable locality teams to allocate the most appropriate support worker based on the needs of children or key family members. Introducing a new triage process was a significant challenge. Allocation of work to newly formed teams containing new and revised roles initially built some delay in the allocation of referrals. This was identified as a risk and plans were developed to streamline the allocation process.
12. To enable this significant change of approach a workforce development plan was introduced. Prior to the changes early help responses tended to be focused on the age of children, with children's centre staff focusing on parents with children aged 0 to 2 years, SLF focused on older aged children, and youth work focused on working with young people, often with little prior assessment of broader family needs.

13. Guidance and training were tailored for both staff who moved into the generic roles, and to those staff who remained in a similar role but moved to work within a multi skilled generic team.
14. A feature of the changes introduced in April 2019 is that multi skilled teams are able to provide a broad variety of support to families. The locality teams include Keyworkers who provide 1 to 1 intensive support to families for up to 12 months , Family Wellbeing Workers who undertake briefer periods of support based on child and family needs, Youth Workers who provide 1 to 1 support over 12 sessions to young people encountering relationship, emotional, or behavioural difficulties, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) workers who undertake assessments to provide packages of support for children with special educational needs or disabilities, and qualified Wellbeing practitioners who provide support to children suffering from anxiety but fall below the threshold for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support.
15. In addition to the support provided by practitioners the Children and Family Wellbeing Service also co-ordinates a broad variety of group related programmes for young people and families. The programmes can be introduced and based on the needs of families and young people but include domestic abuse and parenting centred programmes, youth support groups, and a young carers group.

The impact of the Children and Family Wellbeing Service

16. To give some indication of the impact of early help support, information has been introduced from three sources. Firstly, data on cases dealt with by the CFWS which includes overall numbers of cases open to the service, and data on the progress of cases dealt with by keyworkers undertaking intensive family support (appendix A). Secondly, feedback from families on the quality of the service they received, captured on case closure (appendix B). Thirdly, from an overview of the Leicestershire performance in relation to meeting national Troubled Families targets.
17. There are currently some difficulties with providing accurate early help related data, and therefore comparing data pre and post review can only be provided as a guide. Notably the review led to revised team structures introducing some new roles post review which did not appear in the pre review structure, and additionally the way in which individual and family numbers were counted altered slightly between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
18. Having highlighted the difficulties it is of note that the total number of individuals worked with by the CFWS post review in 2019/20 (7,114) was similar to the total number of individuals worked with pre review in 2018/19 (7,020). The total number of families open to the service over the same period fell from 3,285 in 2018/19 to 2,733 families in 2019/20. Some of this can be accounted for by changes in recording practices. However, the fall in numbers of families rather than individuals worked with may also relate to revised working practices and variety of practitioner roles available within each locality. In the new service it has become easier to undertake briefer forms of intervention through family wellbeing workers or youth workers where needs of the child or family are identified as being less complex.

19. In terms of the positive impact CFWS support can have on families, a family star assessment which monitors progress is undertaken with families receiving 1 to 1 support from Keyworkers. Progress is charted across 10 domains as previously highlighted.
20. The results remain encouraging and are similar to the findings of the evaluation project in 2017. At the end of 2019/20, 69% of families receiving intensive family support cases were showing positive progress across at least three of the domains of the family star assessment.
21. In March 2020 the CFWS was successful in achieving 100% of the payment by results target set by the government. The target for each family is reached if families achieve significant progress and/or achieved continuous employment. The ambitious target of 2,770 families was set at the start of phase 2 of the Troubled Families Unit programme. Due to the success seen at a national level the programme was extended for a further year, with a new local target being set of 464 families. Whilst there will be some challenges in the year ahead in terms of reaching educational and employment outcomes in this difficult financial environment, the service is confident that families will continue to receive the support they need to achieve sustained and significant outcomes. It is of note that the national troubled families programme, and associated funding, is currently due to end in 2021.
22. In terms of assessing the quality of service children and families receive, at the conclusion of work between families and the CFWS a case closure form is completed which captures feedback from families. In September 2019 an audit was undertaken of 40 case closure summaries randomly selected from a list of 79 undertaken during the year (see Appendix B). The closure summary asks families a series of questions concerning the service they received and concludes by asking for an overall rating of service. Of this sample 95% rated the service they received as good (22%) or excellent (73%). The positive findings were in line with feedback received from a deep dive case audit, which involves a detailed analysis of the quality of CFWS case work with families. The last audit during 2019 involved the review of 25 cases. 89% of the 18 families who responded stated that the worker listened to the point of view of the child, 89% also said that the worker had involved them in the planning, and 78% stated they received the help they needed.

CFWS response to COVID

23. The service has tried to minimise the impact of COVID in relation to the support for children and families. Contact has been risk assessed and face to face contact has been maintained where there have been significant worries or concerns. In all other cases open to individual workers, contact has continued via telephone or other digital platforms. Group work and the 0 to 5 Pathway have been halted in their normal format. Contact has been maintained with families awaiting programmes, and group work and learning materials have been provided where families can communicate in this way. It is anticipated that the demand for service could raise significantly when schools return after the school holidays.

Priorities and areas for development

24. The structural and role changes along with the move to a locality-based model led to the need to change the triage and allocation of early help cases. During the initial period of the changes the turnaround times from the receipt of referrals to the allocation work were inconsistent and often slow. This was picked up in the feedback from the Ofsted inspection of children's social care in 2019. As a part of the inspection Ofsted reviewed early help cases opened between the March and September 2019 shortly after the implementation of changes.
25. In order to improve the timeliness of allocation of work the triage process within CFWS was revised. Notably the decision-making process around CFWS triage was streamlined along with the allocation process within localities. The data relating to unassigned work waiting for allocation is provided at Appendix A. The break in data from December 2019 was due to improvements being made to the data by introducing unassigned work as an automated management report forwarded to CFWS managers on a weekly basis.
26. A snapshot of unassigned work awaiting allocation is recorded on one day each week. The level of work awaiting allocation was particularly high during the first three months of the introduction of the CFWS in May, June, and July 2019. Levels of unassigned work began to fall from August 2019, and there have been more significant reductions from March 2020 after changes to the triage process came fully into effect in February 2020.
27. The CFWS offers a variety of early support services and it was highlighted during the Early Help Review that developments were needed to improve the performance and outcome data linked to early help support. Work has been ongoing to improve the recording and analysis of CFWS activity. Areas being developed include, the ability to analyse CFWS data linked to the families primarily presenting need, capturing data on the development benchmarks for children aged 0 to 2 years, providing better data in relation to the outcomes of children stepped up and stepped down between statutory social work and targeted early help support, and introducing data on education outcomes.
28. The CFWS is currently undertaking a multi-agency early help system review with a number of stakeholder agencies to inform a partnership co-ordinated plan. The review has highlighted areas for developing and co-ordinating early help support across agencies involved in early support, including schools. The feedback highlighted a strong view that agencies providing early help support across Leicestershire need to improve collaborative working practices. Key areas for development are the need for greater collaboration in the governance of co-ordinated early help arrangements, more effective sharing of early help data across agencies, and the need for a shared case management systems and assessments.

Resource Implications

29. There are no current resource implications.

30. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service was introduced in April 2019. The focus of the service has been providing tailored support services to families with children aged 0 to 19 years of age, through multi skilled teams working closely with partner agencies across five localities. The Ofsted inspection highlighted that the CFWS offers a broad variety of early help services to families and was positive around work undertaken with partner agencies.
31. The national troubled families funding has been used in Leicestershire to fund the keyworker support provided to families encountering significant difficulties. The funding is due to end in 2021 which was one of the driving factors behind the Early Help Review in 2018. The one to one support provided by keyworkers was preserved from the SLF Service in the new CFWS arrangements based on the positive findings from the evaluation project. It is of note that the family star data which monitors progress of families allocated a keyworker remains extremely positive.
32. Finally, in relation to the impact of the new CFWS from the perspective of service users the feedback from families in relation to the quality of service remains very positive, with 95% of families rating the service they receive as good or excellent at the point of case closure.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

33. There are no alert procedures

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Children and Family Wellbeing Service performance related data

Appendix B – Children and Family Wellbeing Service feedback from service users from 40 case closure summaries

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

34. There are no current EHRIA implications. A full EHRIA was conducted during as a part of the Early Help Review in 2018.

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Children and Family Wellbeing Service Performance 2019/20 to 2020/21 Year to Date (YTD)

	Start of Covid					In Covid	
	2018/2019 YTD	2019/2020 Q1	2019/2020 Q2	2019/2020 Q3	2019/2020 Q4	2019/2020 YTD	2020/2021 Q1
	YTD	April- June	July- Sept	Oct- Dec	Jan- March	YTD	April- June
Total number of families open to CFWS*	3285	1537	1555	1453	1388	2733	1360
Total number of individuals open to CFWS*	7114	3625	3680	3562	3430	7020	3031

*these figures include group work

Number of families 0-2 Pathway 2018/2019	718
Number of families 0-2 Pathway 2019-2020	502
Number of families 0-2 Pathway 2020-2021 YTD	254

Open Cases

Family Wellbeing Worker	463	499	470	607	2039	657
Key Worker	551	431	326	395	1703	500
Wellbeing Practitioner	52	47	53	76	228	68
Youth Worker	237	146	94	103	580	121
YOT Worker	60	10	20	12	102	9
Total	1363	1133	963	1193	4652	1355

* Please note there are other worker relationships that are not included in these figures, hence they don't add up to the total number of families worked with. These figures do not include group work numbers

Family Star Outcomes

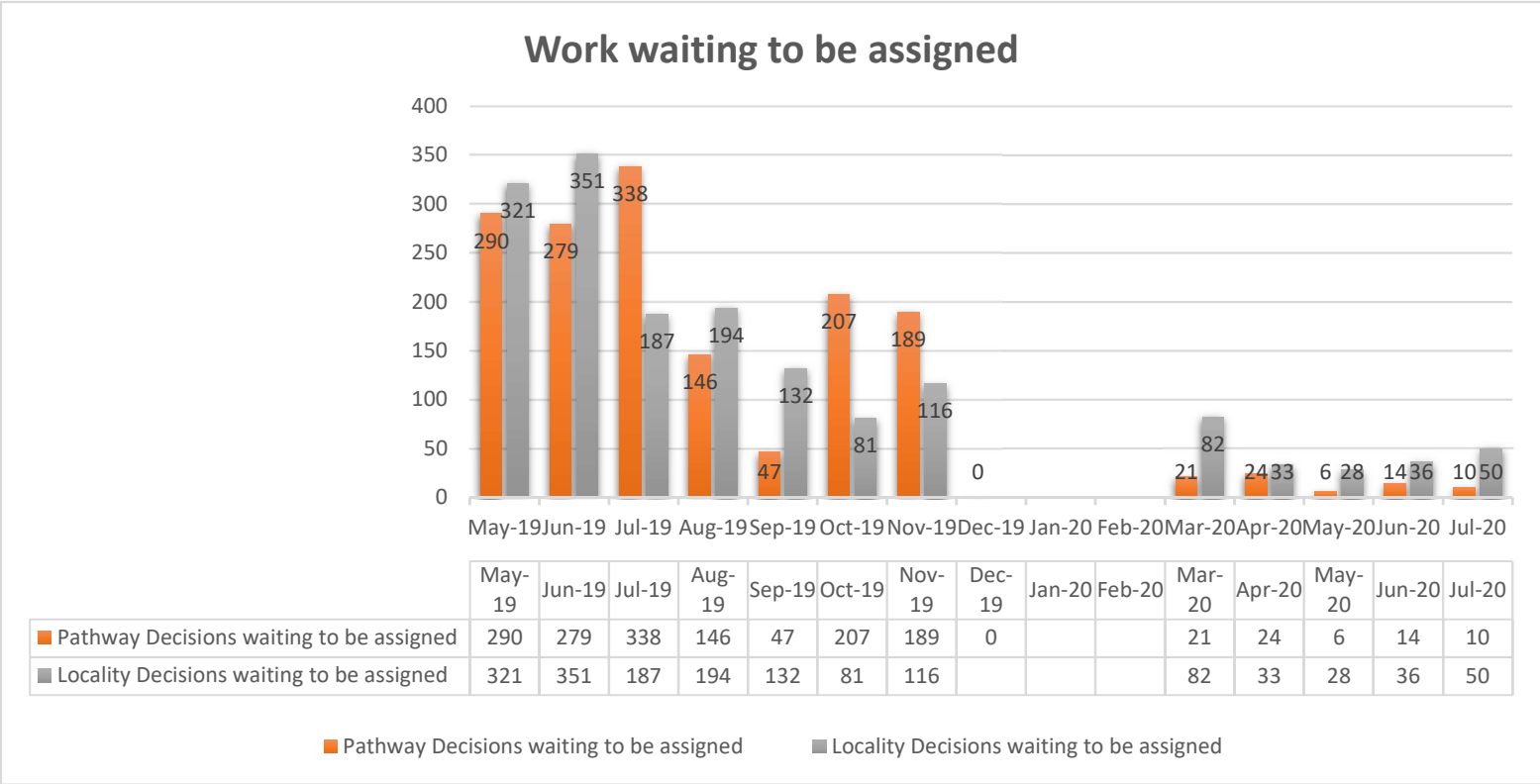
Family Star- Total number	70	80	101	85	336	103
Family Star- positive progress made in atleast 3 of the 10 domains	47	54	71	61	233	70
Family Star- positive progress made %	67.1%	67.5%	70.3%	71.8%	69.3%	68.0%

Number of EH assessments completed in Quarter	580	439	442	439	1900	530
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Children and Family Wellbeing Service Performance 2019/20 to 2020/21 Year to Date (YTD)

Cases Awaiting Allocation

Date	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	
Pathway Decisions waiting to be assigned	290	279	338	146	47	207	189				21	24	6	14	10	
Locality Decisions waiting to be assigned	321	351	187	194	132	81	116	Break in data while tableau was developed				82	33	28	36	50



Appendix B

Briefing report relating to feedback from 40 Children and Families Wellbeing Service (CFWS) case closure forms - September 2019.

The purpose of this briefing is to highlight the feedback found in 40 CFWS case closure forms recorded on the Mosaic case management system. The case closure forms were randomly selected from a long list of 70 cases, that were closed to CFWS during April to June 2019. The case closure form asks parents 8 broad questions around, what help a parent or child needed, did the support or services that they were provided with make a difference to themselves or others, and how they rated the help. The responses to 3 questions were difficult to interpret so have been excluded.

The majority (31 /40) of responses indicated that their individual or family needs had been met. Of the remaining responses for 4 families CFWS support was no longer the most appropriate service, 1 family moved away, and 4 families either refused or disengaged. 31 of the closure forms were jointly completed by the family and the allocated CFWS workers and 5 closures forms were completed by the family or an individual alone. There were 4 forms without an indication of how they were completed.

Question 1 What was the main reason for referral? What is it that you hoped could change?	Summary of main reasons
55.0% (47/85) of intervention goals agreed at the initial referral stage were focused on children's needs and supporting parents to manage their children's behaviours.	<p>7 of the referrals had 1 intervention goal and 12 of the referrals had 2 intervention goals. Furthermore 21 of the referrals had 3 intervention goals and 3 had 4 intervention goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21.0 % (18/85) were for managing behaviours and putting in place routines at home*• 11.0 % (9/85) were for managing behaviours at school and improving school attendance. *• 9.0 % (8/85) were for support to improve children's mental health• 7.0 % (6/85) were for support to improve the child development concerns• 2.0 % (2/85) were for support to reduce child on parent violence. <p>The remaining 5% were for support around child sexual / criminal exploitation, at risk of neglect, substance misuse, at risk of offending.</p>

<p>45.0% (38/85) of intervention goals agreed at the initial referral stage were focused on the parents lived experiences and their personal needs.</p> <p>Notably being isolated and requiring family networks emerged as a secondary intervention goal during the CFWS support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.0 % (13 /85) were for support to improve parent's mental health* • 8.0% (7/85) were for support to reduce domestic abuse * • 7.0% (6/85) were for support being out of work and money worries* • 6.0% (5/85) were for support to reduce isolation and to improve family networks • 4.0% (3/85) were for parent's substance misuse problems • 4.0% (3/85) were for support for housing and home conditions • Isolation and family network working support increased from 5 at the initial referral stage to 11 during the CFWS support
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Question 3; Looking back to your situation at the start and now, which change is most important to you/your family?	A selection of parent's comments is highlighted below
<p>The most important change for many parents was getting the help that they had asked for which led to either improvements for their children or themselves.</p> <p>For some parents the most important change was about unexpected positive changes in how they saw themselves and being motivated to change</p>	<p>Child's behavioural issues and routines*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I feel that me and the children are a team and work with each other to make our home life happy • "We've learnt about managing behaviours and why children do the things they do" • "People are now able to talk my son and he is prepared to listen". <p>School attendance/behaviour*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My son now wants help for his (school) anxiety" <p>Parental mental health*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am now able to manage how I feel; and I feel I have a stronger bond my daughter" • "Me feeling better and more motivated is the most important thing" • "My new home"

	<p>Being out of work /financial exclusion*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Getting a job, this meant I got into a better routine, so the boy's attendance at school has improved." • "I feel less alone" <p>Domestic abuse*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Me and my daughter being happy". • "My children are no longer at risk of seeing incidents ta home".
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Question 6: Did anyone else help you to make these changes? Include services and informal support	Parents viewed
Family, and relatives plus schools were referred to as providing the most important extra support that helped parents achieve the changes they wanted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close family, grandmothers, relatives and friends (23) as providing important support to parents. • Schools (12) as being supportive in bringing about change in conjunction with the work of CFWS workers. Also, the involvement of SENDIAS, SENCO and SEND worker and Inclusion Partnership support, was seen as beneficial. • General Practitioners (3), Health Visitors (4), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (2) Care Navigator (1) Sexual Health Service (1) as supporting the changes that needed to be made. • Access to Preschool support (3) and Nursey support (3) and Pathway support was valuable. • Counselling and support agencies such as Relate, Turning Point, Women's Aid and Home start helping them make the changes needed, • Police and Probation as helpful bringing about change in domestic abuse intervention goals

Question 7: What do you think would have happened without this worker?	Parents indicated that I would
<p>Most parents felt that their situation would have got worse, they would still not be managing, or they would have remained the same.</p>	<p>"I would probably have got worse" (33.0%) "I would be in the same position with no change and not managing" (25.0%) "I would have had a breakdown, or still feeling depressed or would have taken longer to pick myself up" (18.0%) "I would still feel isolated (8.0%) "I would have continued to drink till I hit rock bottom"</p> <p>More seriously three parents indicated: "I would be dead"</p> <p>"I would have lost my kids or social services would be involved" "I think that my child would be at risk or not secure"</p>

Question 8: How would you rate the service you have received?	Break down of the ratings
<p>95% (38 /40) of parents rated the support they received as excellent or good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73.0% (29/40) of parents rated the support they received as excellent. • 22.0% (9/40) of parents rated the support they received as good. • 5.0% (2/40) of parents rated the support they received as satisfactory or made no comment.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

COVID-19 RECOVERY UPDATE

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a detailed update on progress made within the Children and Family Services Department in implementing its interim recovery in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and to set out initial proposals for longer term recovery planning and strategic change in accordance with the Council's Recovery Strategy.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) Covid-19 Recovery Strategy (2020-21) sets out the key principles, governance structures and phases upon which recovery of the Council's functions and services will be based. This will help ensure a joined-up, consistent and well-informed approach throughout the recovery process, with key principles and approaches reflected, which will culminate in a transition to Departmental Service and Business Planning, utilising supplementary mechanisms to complement pre-existing governance and decision-making protocols of the Council.
3. Interim Recovery is described in LCC's Recovery Strategy as;
 - The need to ensure safe service recovery in the short-term - protecting the vulnerable and helping to ensure the Council delivers against its commitments - will require Heads of Service to develop and implement practical interim arrangements for service users, partners, suppliers and staff. Such arrangements will be necessary and applicable to the short-term but may not be appropriate or sustainable for the longer term. Corporate guidance for this short-term planning will be provided, also helping to ensure the longer-term position for the Council is considered.
4. The guidance for Interim Recovery planning aims to support LCC's functions and services in recovering to a suitable interim position, for a period of up to approximately three months, or until full recovery plans are agreed and can start to be actioned.

5. Heads of Service have ensured the production of interim recovery plans, in collaboration with corporate subject matter experts, Business Partners, DMTs and Departmental Business Planning leads.
6. Decisions were made at the beginning of Covid-19 lockdown that all the services within Children and Families are critical and that the majority of functions needed to maintain a safe service delivery. During the crisis the department has reviewed services daily to determine how they should be delivered and to monitor staffing levels to ensure services for the most vulnerable children and families are maintained.
7. The majority of staff work from home or remotely, with some working from County Hall, locality offices or at Oakfield Short Stay School whilst maintaining a good level of contact with the most vulnerable children with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure safety and wellbeing.

Recovery Plans

8. The focus of the department recovery plans is:
 - **Finance** - to minimise the cost of recovery, manage spend approval limits and where possible mitigate additional costs within service budgets. The department continues to look for more efficient service options and delivery approaches to reduce costs and manage income levels as well as continuing to monitor existing Service Level Agreements (SLAs)/Contracts and placements on a regular basis.
 - **Workplace** –staff within the department continue to work from home where possible, with front-line services running from County Hall and localities and face to face visits with service users taking place in line with Workplace Health and Safety Guidance. The application of social distancing measures for staff, visitors and service users is paramount and appropriate PPE has been provided to all staff who require it.
 - **Wellbeing** – Children and Family Services continuously monitor the impact of the current climate on staff well-being and is fully understood. The department is also looking at productivity, motivation, culture and is accessing the required support to mitigate risks and enhance potential benefits. The need for changes to working patterns and hours to accommodate staff and mitigate wellbeing pressures has been considered.
 - **Digital** – As a priority, staff have been supported and have been provided with the necessary tools to fulfil their roles and the department continues to review and analyse future service demands. Staff have developed and embraced new ways of working and have engaged positively with the change. They continue to put forward ideas/suggestions for ongoing digital improvements not only for the department but corporately.

- **Environment** - The Heads of Service continue to assess low carbon options for service delivery and future savings and to avoid additional carbon commitments, they focus on minimising the impact on the environment and enhance the environment where possible.
- **Commissioning and Procurement** – the department continues to ensure up to date information on the service supply chain is viable and resilient, and source alternative providers/suppliers. Consideration is given to the appropriateness of any immediate contract renewals at DMT level.
- **Communication** – The department continues to develop excellent forms of communication with service users, parents and carers, schools, partners and providers for service recovery and ensure it is understood and actioned. Internal communication continues to be critical and the department has engaged with staff through surveys that have included other LCC services.
- **Other service areas during recovery** – The department has worked hard to ensure any immediate requirements for PPE have been met and are clear and conform with existing guidance. It has reviewed immediate and future staffing demands and assessed capacity, including the need for recruitment and/or redeployment to cover vacancies or capacity issues. It continues to manage immediate service demand, including service backlog or step down of need during the crisis.

Service Delivery During the Pandemic and Service Recovery

9. During Covid-19 most services within Children and Families continued to operate and deliver work with families and communities albeit in a different format.

Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care

10. At the beginning of the lockdown period, revised guidance was developed across Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care to support staff in prioritising and adapting how services were delivered to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. The guidance included a risk assessment for each child which informed the risk management plan including the frequency and type of visiting that is in place during the Covid-19 emergency.
11. The front door to Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care has continued to operate, ensuring safeguarding concerns have been dealt with in a timely manner. Additional capacity has been put into the Service in order to ensure incoming referrals are dealt with in a timely manner to meet children's needs.
12. Services to the most vulnerable children are continuing, social workers and children and family wellbeing workers are working directly with children either in their homes, where needed, or via electronic methods (Skype and WhatsApp video calling). Work is now being undertaken across Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care to increase face to face visits with children and families, in line with government guidance.

13. Virtual group work programmes have been delivered and will continue to be delivered to young people and also to parents and carers as part of parenting support programmes.
14. Foster Carer recruitment has continued over the last four months, albeit in a virtual capacity through online events rather than at County Hall.
15. Adoption Panels are being successfully completed virtually. Consideration is being given to the use of Zoom/Microsoft Teams to ensure that applicants are able to participate in information evenings and Prospective Adopter training. Assessment visits to potential adopters are being completed virtually.
16. At the beginning of the lockdown period the Children and Family Wellbeing Centres were all closed and paused the delivery of face to face work within the centres. Work has now been undertaken to re-open the three contact centres at the end of July as phase 1 of the re-opening of all 18 children's centre buildings to the public. Work is taking place to develop plans to look at how the remaining centres can be re-opened safely and in line with guidance.
17. The IMPACT Service was paused at the beginning of the pandemic. At the beginning of July, the service re-started street-based work directly with young people in areas of concern as well as developing an online programme to work with young people across Leicestershire.

Education and SEND

18. Early Years and Childcare advisers have remained in contact with providers who have remained open or are now re-opening to offer support and guidance. Training for the Early Years sector is being delivered online and work has taken place across the last few months to ensure further training can now be offered online rather than through face to face training groups. The Early Years Area Special Educational Needs advice has been delivered remotely, rather than in settings, to ensure Early Years Children with Special Educational Needs remain supported. Early Years Advisors have also been offering support and advice on activities that can be done to support children at home.
19. Whilst many Early Years settings have remained open, particularly for vulnerable children and those children of key workers, the Early Years' Service is now working with childcare providers across Leicestershire to support the full re-opening of Early Years settings in the Autumn Term.
20. The Education Quality and Improvement Team has worked with schools throughout the pandemic to provide advice, guidance and support around the continued provision of education throughout lockdown and in opening schools back up to groups of children prior to the summer holidays. Virtual training has also taken place for school staff and governors.

21. The department is monitoring guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on the proposals for schools re-opening in the autumn and continuing to provide support and guidance to all schools, FE colleges and Early Years settings. A Back to School 2020 campaign was launched in August with a range of information to support parents, carers and children with their return to school in the Autumn Term. In addition to this a 'Getting Ready for School 2020' space has been developed as a resource for parents to support them and their children in preparing for the start of the Autumn Term.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/coronavirus-school-information/getting-ready-for-school-2020>

22. The Admissions Service has continued to process school applications and school appeals are now being heard remotely. In line with DfE guidance, the service will resume non-attendance processes and the issue of penalty notices where appropriate at the start of September.
23. The School Organisation Service has continued to make good progress with the development of additional school places, in particular for those pupils with SEND (forming part of the High Needs Block development plan). Effective planning with contractors and delivery partners has ensured that slippage to the programme and additional costs arising from lockdown/social distancing restrictions have been kept to an absolute minimum.
24. Remote contacts and risk assessed home visits with PPE have been undertaken to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
25. Schools across the County undertook risk assessments for all children deemed to be more vulnerable during the pandemic, particularly focussing on supporting attendance at school. Alongside this, remote learning packages were made available by schools for those not going into school over the summer term.
26. During the pandemic there has been a reduction in the provision of overnight short breaks and a suspension of overnight short breaks for foster carers. Group activities for disabled children over the summer holiday period have also been altered in line with national guidance. However, alternative provision, sometimes with the use of direct payments to families, was offered to families across the county.
27. Services across education and SEND are now working on aiming to return to some face to face work in schools and family homes from September, based on risk assessments.
28. The SEN Assessment Service continued to operate at close to full capacity during the pandemic and performance regarding EHCP Needs Assessment remained high with the large majority of assessments undertaken within the 20-week timescales. Some relaxations to the legislation were provided by the Secretary of State in relation to these timescales, taking into account the restrictions on face to face contact for professionals to undertake certain assessments, for example Educational Psychology. However, assessment

work has been undertaken remotely, and the service has been able to operate without using these relaxations.

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29. Similarly, there were relaxations relating to provision named in existing Education Health Care Plans as many children were unable to attend school. This meant that all 'reasonable endeavours' had to be made between the Local Authority and providers to ensure provision named in EHCPs was delivered to children with SEND. The Local Authority worked closely with providers and parents to ascertain where this was not possible and to make alternative arrangements to ensure that reasonable provision was delivered.
30. At the beginning of the pandemic, all schools, FE colleges and settings undertook risk assessments at child and school level to determine which children would be safer at school or at home. These risk assessments were provided to the Local Authority where they were reviewed, and individual discussions took place to ensure the majority of children's needs were met at an appropriate level during the period.
31. Annual Reviews of EHCPs continued remotely, where possible, and any changes to EHCPs were completed or are in the process of being concluded.
32. Decision-making panels for EHCP assessments and issuing of plans have continued virtually and parents and carers have continued to be advised of the outcomes of these panels.
33. Staff within the Specialist Teaching Service have continued to provide advice and support to children and schools during the pandemic. The majority of work has been undertaken remotely. For example, advice has been given about the use of technology to support remote learning for children who have a visual or hearing impairment. Traded work with schools has largely continued, for example, through on-line training. Specialist Teachers have been able to advise schools and work with parents/carers and young people around 'reasonable endeavours' to enable schools to meet the identified needs of children in a creative way.
34. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has continued to undertake statutory work during the pandemic period. Individual child assessments as part of the EHCP Needs Assessment process have been undertaken using a variety of means. Where necessary these assessments have been qualified with an acknowledgment that there has not been an opportunity for direct face to face work with a child. The EPS has also worked closely with partners to produce a range of helpful information, for example, around mental health issues during Covid 19 and tips about coping with stress and anxiety.
35. All SEND Services (SENA, STS, EPS and Disabled Children's Service) have plans in place for some face to face work to commence during the autumn term, in negotiation with providers and parents and carers, in line with Government guidance and risk assessments. This will include attendance at key Annual Reviews, discussions with settings about meeting particular children's needs and specialist assessment work.

Lessons Learnt

36. Key lessons learnt for the Department are as follows:

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The use of technology to enable remote working: making appropriate equipment and technology available to all staff quickly has resulted in the department's ability to maintain service delivery across the majority of functions. This means that the department is prepared for further business continuity issues that would require remote working. It has also provided opportunities to explore alternative ways of meeting with staff both across the organisation and with partners in order to strengthen joint work.

Working virtually with families: through the use of technology and the use of Apps to see children and their families, many services have been able to work successfully with children and families virtually. This has included face to face work with families and children, meetings, group work and adoption panels

This method of working has on the whole been well received and embraced by children and families and has meant that meetings can be more flexible to meet the demands of families, including consideration around safety. The department is now considering ways in which elements of this practice is implemented as business as usual where appropriate and safe.

Improved engagement with young people, parents and carers: in some circumstances the engagement with young people, in particular those with SEND, has improved as they are often more comfortable engaging in a virtual arena rather than in a room which can often cause anxiety. This has been particularly noticeable in the development of the Written Statement of Action, following the Ofsted/QCQ local area inspection of SEND. Many young people have been engaged in the co-production of the plan using various virtual platforms.

Reduced costs: as well as the reduction in costs associated to travel and expenses, there have been marked reductions in stationery, post and printing experiences and staff have moved to almost paperless modes of working and are using the tools available to them more routinely, such as secure email.

Resource Implications

37. The cost of Covid-19 for the Children and Families Service may only be fully understood later in the year or into the next financial year. Nationally, it has been recognised that it is highly likely that there will be pressure on children's services when schools return and the impact of the pandemic on children and families is fully understood. Therefore, there are a number of key risk areas that the department will monitor over the coming months

- Any potential rises in the costs of placement for children in care both in terms of increased numbers of children in care alongside increased unit costs due to placement demand and market pressures.
- Any increases in the number of contacts and referrals into Children's Social Care during recovery that could lead to more children requiring support from services that could result in increased costs of family support services.
- Any increased demand on the SENA service relating to requests for assessments for Education Health Care plans when schools and settings fully open in the Autumn term.

Background Papers

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

38. This report has been e-mailed to all members of the County Council

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List of Appendices

39. None

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

40. None

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

**CHILDREN IN CARE AND PERMANENCE REPORT
APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Children in Care and Permanence Annual Report for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Department of Health, Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children (DCSF/DH. 2015) requires a report on the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care.

Background

3. In Leicestershire, following consultation with young people, the department agreed to talk about Children in Care (CIC) not Looked after Children and Young People (LAC).
4. In Leicestershire it is the aim to ensure that all children are given opportunities to be happy, healthy and to achieve their best outcomes. This is embodied in the vision statement and the 'Road to Excellence' Continuous Improvement Plan that drives improvement in Children's Social Care. It is the ambition for children and young people to enjoy positive experiences in safe and supportive families, well connected to their local communities and when necessary well supported by a wide range of targeted support services -- building strong and resilient family relationships.

5. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services was carried out by Ofsted in September 2019. The Inspection found 'the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers to be Good.
6. Ofsted made six key recommendations for Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care which are addressed in a detailed continuous improvement plan. An update on progress against these individual recommendations is presented on a six-monthly basis to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Children in Care and Permanence Annual Report Summary

7. The Children in Care and Permanence Annual Report (attached as Appendix A to this report) provides the annual summary of the core activities relating to Children in Care in Leicestershire. The key findings are as follows:
8. The number of children in care on 31 March 2020 was 657. The previous end of year count was 582. This is an increase of 12.9%. This is slightly at variance to the lesser upward trend experienced by many local authorities but does reflect Leicestershire's change of practice relating to the accommodation of 16-17-year-old young people deemed to be homeless and therefore children in need. The current number of children in care equates to 46.9 per 10,000 children in Leicestershire. This compares to an average of 52.8 looked after children per 10,000 children in statistical neighbour authorities at 31 March 2019.
9. 71% (466) children are placed in family-based placements. Of these 45% (298) are placed with in-house carers, connected carers, adoptive families and parents, 28% (188) with independent agency foster carers. There is a decreased use of independent foster agency placements compared to last year (188 compared to 198 – 5% decrease)
10. 56 children were in residential care on 31 March 2020, representing 8.5% of the total looked after children number; this is below the national average of 9%. On 31 March 2019 there were 52 children in residential care.

11. Children who have experienced three placements or more in the last year was 8.7% which was a little higher than last year's average of 7.7% but still significantly below the statistical neighbour average of 11.9%
12. On 31 March 2020 41 children subject to an Interim or Full Care Order were living with their parent/s compared to 17 the previous year. This substantial increase is because of the efforts during care proceedings to help parents change their circumstances to enable the return of their children and efforts to return home children who have been in care for some time where parental circumstance has changed. The Department keeps these findings under review, to ensure that, amongst other things, there is effectiveness of use of the pre-proceedings protocol. This is a particular focus of Leicestershire's continuous improvement plan.
13. Children with long term stability (more than 3 years) decreased slightly, from 65% to 62% and remains below the statistical neighbour average of 66%. This area of performance is a particular focus for improvement activity. An audit will be completed to understand the profile of children affected and to understand the related needs of carers.
14. Recorded statutory visits to children completed in timescale rose from 70% in 2018/19 to 83% for 2019/20. This is still below the target but represents a significant improvement following activity driven by the continuous improvement plan. Managers have reported that the visits are completed, and it is the recording that is the issue.
15. Following the Ofsted Inspection findings in September 2019 children with a completed and signed off care plan in the previous six months decreased in the last quarter of 2019/20, as managers took a hard line on quality of assessments, returning them to social workers for improvement. The end of year figure was 60% (target 90%). However, improvement in completion rates and quality of plans is now being seen.
16. The number of children who have had their annual health assessment remains high and represents an increase on last year (2019/20 92%, 2018/19 82%).

Initial Health Assessments are not consistently referred to the health provider in a timely way (within 48 hours of coming into care), however there has been a good improvement with monthly reports to the Lead Member for Children and Families to oversee this improvement activity.

17. Up to date immunisation and vaccination of CiC for 2019/20 is 90.4% compared to 82% the previous year, and 87.6% of CiC received a dental check (previously 91.8%)

18. 278 Care Leavers were eligible for inclusion in the 2019/2020 return, of whom:

- I. The local authority was in touch with 96% (target 90%).
- II. 64.2% of Care Leavers who had not returned home for more than six months were in education, employment or training when contacted around their birthday (target 50%)
- III. 94.8% were in suitable accommodation (target 80%)

19. Leicestershire CiC and Care Leavers are actively encouraged and supported to participate in the shaping of services through consultation events, Children in Care Council and SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care).

20. Performance is regularly monitored via monthly reports to Senior Management Team and a monthly performance meeting held with managers. This meeting is chaired by the Assistant Director, Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care.

Consultations

21. Ongoing consultation takes place with children in care via the Children in Care Council and with Care Leavers, via Support to Young People After Care (SYPAC).

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Children in Care and Permanence Annual Report

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

22. All services provided are done so in a framework of respecting equality and diversity for young people.

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CHILDREN IN CARE AND PERMANENCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The Department of Health Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children (DCSF/DH. 2015) requires a report on the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care.

This report provides the annual summary of the core activities relating to Looked after Children and Young People (LAC). In Leicestershire, following consultation with young people we agreed to talk about Children in Care (CIC) not LAC, therefore we will use this reference throughout.

The key messages within this report are:

- The number of children in care on 31 March 2020 was 657. The previous end of year count was 582. This is an increase of 12.9%. This is slightly at variance to the lesser upward trend experienced by many Local authorities but does reflect Leicestershire's change of practice relating to the accommodation of 16-17-year-old young people deemed to be homeless and children in need. The current number of children in care equates to 46.9 per 10,000 children in Leicestershire. This compares to an average of 52.8 looked after children per 10,000 children in Statistical Neighbour authorities at 31 March 2019.
- 71% (466) children are placed in family-based placements.
- Of these 45% (298) are placed with in-house carers, connected carers, adoptive families and parents, 28% (188) with independent agency foster carers.
- There is a decreased use of independent foster agency placements compared to last year (188 compared to 198 – 5% decrease)
- 56 children were in residential care on the 31 March 2020, representing 8.5% of the total looked after children number and is below the national average of 9%. On 31 March 2019 there were 52 children in residential care.

- Children who have experienced 3 placements or more in the last year was 8.7%. A little higher than last year's average of 7.7% but still significantly below the statistical neighbour average of 11.9%
- On 31 March 2020 41 children subject to an Interim or Full Care Order were living with their parent/s compared to 17 the previous year. This substantial increase is because of the efforts during care proceedings to help parents change their circumstances to enable the return of their children and efforts to return home children who have been in care some time, where parental circumstance has changed. The Department keeps these findings under review, to ensure that, amongst other things that there is effectiveness of use of the pre -proceedings protocol. This is a particular focus of Leicestershire's continuous improvement plan
- Children with long term stability (more than 3 years) decreased slightly, from 65% to 62% and remains below the statistical neighbour average of 66%. This area of performance is a particular focus for improvement activity. An audit will be completed to understand the profile of children affected and to understand the related needs of carers.
- Recorded Statutory visits to children completed in timescale rose from 70% in 2018/19 to 83% for 2019/20. This is still below the target but represents a significant improvement following activity driven by the continuous improvement plan. Managers tell us the visits are completed and it is the recording that is the issue.
- Following the Ofsted Inspection findings in September 2019 children with a completed and signed off care plan in the previous 6 months decreased in the last quarter of 2019/20, as managers took a hard line on quality of assessments, returning them to social workers for improvement. The end of year figure was 60% (target 90%). However, we are now seeing improvement in completion rates and quality of plans.

- The number of children who have had their annual health assessment remains high and represents an increase on last year (2019/20 92%, 2018/19 82%)
- Initial Health Assessments are not consistently referred to the health provider in a timely way (within 48 hours of coming into care), however there has been a good improvement with monthly reports to the Lead Member to oversee this improvement activity.
- Up-to-date immunisation and vaccination of CiC for 2019/20 is 90.4% compared to 82% the previous year, and 87.6% of CiC received a dental check (previously 91.8%)
- 278 Care Leavers were eligible for inclusion in the 2019/2020 return, of whom:
 - i) The local authority was in touch with 96% (target 90%).
 - ii) 64.2% of Care Leavers who had not returned home for more than six months were in education, employment or training when contacted around their birthday (target 50%)
 - iii) 94.8% were in suitable accommodation (target 80%)
- Leicestershire CiC and Care Leavers are actively encouraged and supported to participate in the shaping of services through consultation events and Children in Care Council and SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care).

1. INTRODUCTION

OUR VISION

Leicestershire is the best place for all children, young people and their families

This means that we will describe the outcomes we want to achieve for children, young people and their families and identify measures that can tell us how well we are achieving against them in comparison with other English local authorities. We will aim to be the best performing local authority in the country against these measures, and where we are not yet there we will set stretching targets for annual improvement.

OUR MISSION

Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities.

"Our Children Our Future" Jane Moore, Director

Leicestershire's commitment to inspire and support children in care and care leavers to be ambitious and successful

In Leicestershire we want to ensure that all children are given opportunities to be happy, healthy and to achieve their best outcomes. We embody this in our vision statement and the 'Road to Excellence'.

We want children and young people to enjoy positive experiences in safe and supportive families, well connected to their local communities and when necessary well supported by a wide range of targeted support services -- building strong and resilient family relationships.

When children cannot safely live in their family or wider network our priority is to provide safe secure and caring homes where children are given all the opportunities

they need to inspire then to have high aspiration and to support their success through their childhood and into adulthood. We will do this by valuing children for who they are and who they want to be. Our Permanency policy sets out our commitment to do this¹.

In Leicestershire we are committed to our children in care and care leavers and are determined to ensure that we carry out our duty and responsibilities as a Corporate Parent with genuine passion, ambition, enthusiasm and care.

We understand that all of our children have individual needs and goals and our care planning and planned support offered to all of our children reflects this.

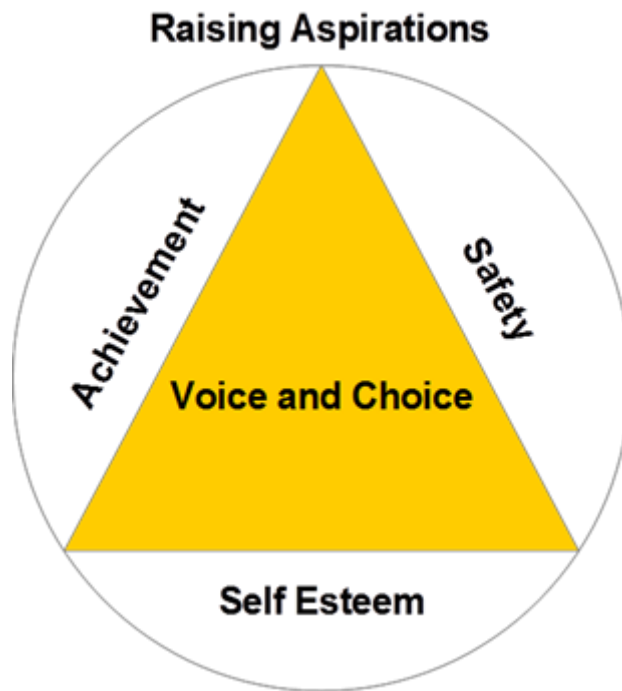
We carefully monitor and support education and learning for our children to enable progress and success and strive to ensure that our children are healthy both physically and emotionally.

We know that we will be successful corporate parents if we really listen to our children and ensure that their views and opinions have meaning in all areas of our decision making, “ **You said. We did**”. The impact of this is seen in the enthusiasm, leadership and effectiveness of our children and their participation in our Children in Care Council, Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC), our Corporate Parenting Board and many more participation events.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the responsibilities of Leicestershire County Council as corporate parent to children in care. The Strategy outlines the expectations and key principles that provide the framework for a cohesive and effective corporate parenting response for children in care and Care Leavers.

¹ Permanence Policy:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/llr/childcare/leicestershire/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Permanence%20Policy%20Update%20May2020.pdf



Our promise to children in care and care leavers was developed in partnership with children in care Council and SYPAC (supporting young people after care) other agencies and culminated in a launch and public commitment in April 2019:



1.1. Achievements since 2019

The Ofsted inspection of children's social care services took place in September 2019. The inspection found the experience of children and care leavers to be good overall. The following was highlighted in the report:

- 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 deliver
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

1.2 Areas of Development for children in care arising from Ofsted Inspection

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Although these findings refer to "a few" and not the majority in Leicestershire we are ambitious for all children in care so are working hard to build on improvements and build an outstanding service.

1.3 Progress since the inspection

Leicestershire is a forward-thinking Authority that is ambitious for our children and young people. With a focus on children and building resilience in families, we are

proud of the progress we are making via our Road to Excellence – continuous improvement plan; and in providing consistently good services for children, young people and their families.

The Local Authority has invested in children's social care to make our ambitious plans a reality for children, young people and their families, and we are seeing the positive impact of this investment.

Recommendations from the Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers carried out by Ofsted in September 2019 are addressed in the revised Road to Excellence- continuous improvement plan. An update on progress against these individual recommendations is presented on a six-monthly basis to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in the form of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP sits behind Leicestershire's Road to Excellence Plan which sets an ambition to establish a culture of learning, with two key priorities:

- ✓ High quality evidence-based practice
- ✓ Strong and effective management oversight

We will achieve this through four key behaviours:

- ✓ Taking the right action at the right time
- ✓ Being a learning organization
- ✓ Embedding excellent practice
- ✓ Developing policy and performance.

We are proud of our learning culture that is supporting staff to be the best practitioners they can be. Ofsted reported on an environment that has High Expectations, High Challenge and High Support.



What we working on to achieve for our CIC?

There has been focused work on children at risk of entering care, ensuring that were it is safe to do so, decisions are made through the Children's Decision-Making Panel. This has seen an improvement in court timescales, ensuring that, in most instances, assessments of parents and family members start prior to the commencement of proceedings.

Children placed with parents has increased oversight from Independent Reviewing Officers, who use the Quality Assurance challenge process to identify delay and escalate if necessary for a timely response. In addition, the Head of Service for Children in Care completes two audits a year to identify urgent action, particularly identifying issues relating to delay.

Permanence Panel has been monitoring the achievement of permanence for all children who are in care. The following progress has been made in achieving

‘absolute certainty about living arrangements’ and in ensuring management oversight of permanence:

In January 2020 136 children had permanence agreed, 327 children had no permanence decision recorded on case records, on 144 records there was evidence of management oversight and tracking of permanence. 23 had had permanence considered by panel, but permanence was not agreed.

As at June 2020 the number of children with a permanence decision had risen to 157. The number of children without a permanence decision but with management oversight, evidencing tracking and monitoring, had increased to 182. 29 had had permanence considered by panel, but permanence was not agreed for a range of reasons.

The Local Authority recognises the importance of achieving permanence for children and young people and that to do this, key activities are identified to improve and maintain the work forces understanding permanence. The overall progress against these performance indicators is tracked through the CIP, particularly focusing on reducing drift and delay for children in foster care and management oversight. The actual activity is tracked through a Permanence Action Plan.

2. CHILDREN IN CARE (CiC)

2.1. Corporate Parenting

When a child comes into care, the council becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children in their care.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy² sets out the responsibilities of Leicestershire County Council as corporate parent to children in care. The Strategy outlines the expectations and key principles that provide the framework for a cohesive and effective corporate parenting response for children in care and Care Leavers, namely:

² Corporate Parenting Strategy:

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s149178/Appendix%20A%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.pdf>

- ✓ To act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
- ✓ To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- ✓ To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- ✓ To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- ✓ To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- ✓ For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
- ✓ To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Strategy details that the lead member for children's services (LMCS) and the Director of Children's Services (DCS) are required by law to hold direct local accountability for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of the local authority's children's services (in 1998, the Secretary of State wrote to councillors reminding them that they are ultimately accountable for the quality of care provided by their local authority and set out their specific responsibility to lead this work and monitor its effectiveness).

This position has been supported through published guides for councillors by the for Education in 2003 and 2013, highlighting that all elected members should be prepared and ready to champion the interests of looked after children and young people in their community. Elected members are in the unique position to promote opportunities for looked after children and care leavers through their political power and influence, through their connections in the community, schools, health services, local businesses and employers.

2.2 Corporate Parenting Team

Many children and young people find it difficult being a child in care and living away from their families. The Corporate Parenting Team tries to make sure children in care are given opportunities so that they can reach their potential. Support available includes:

Celebrating achievements

Children in care can be nominated by a social worker, youth worker, carers or someone who knows about their achievements, to receive an award. Each CiC receives a personal letter of congratulations from the Corporate Parenting Manager and a gift voucher. They are also invited to an award ceremony, held every 12 months. The Chairman, Lead Member, Director and Assistant Director host the event.

Laptops and computers

Children in care and care leavers can get a computer and printer to use at home to share with other children in the household. If the young person is over 16 years of age and in full time education or training they can apply for a laptop.

Driving lessons

Young people can get financial help when learning to drive. The Corporate Parenting Team will pay for the provisional licence, theory test and practical driving test, and will also pay half the cost of your driving lessons.

Swimming

All children in care can get free access to swimming pools at leisure centres using the Activ8Card if they are under 16 years old.

Funding for individuals

Each CiC can apply for up to £150 each year from the 'Time 2 Spend' fund. The funding can be used for trying a new hobby (such as horse riding or dancing) or getting special equipment for this new activity; getting a musical instrument or helping towards a school or college trip.

Children's Rights Officers

Children's Rights Officers work for this service and offer a range of support like:

- Helping CiC understand their rights and make sure they are being treated fairly
- Giving information, help and advice
- Attending meetings with the CiC and speaking on their behalf
- Help with getting legal advice
- Providing advice on how to make a complaint
- Making sure the CiC is listened to by professionals and their carers.

The Ofsted inspection of Leicestershire's children's services in 2019 found that:

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 Public Law Outline. Children using this service value the listening ear of advocates.

Independent Reviewing Officers

An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is the person who ensures that children looked after by the Local Authority have regular reviews to consider the care plan and placement. In Leicestershire, the IRO plays a key part in quality assurance by ensuring that the child's plan is appropriate, that the social worker takes timely action to meet the child's needs, that there is quality management oversight and that children in care have a voice.

2.3 VOICE

Leicestershire County Council is committed to listening, hearing and responding to the voice of children, young people and their families.

The Ofsted Inspection of Leicestershire's children's services in 2019 found that:

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.

In addition to this this, the Council believes that children in care and care leavers have an important role to play in shaping services and policies like The Promise and Contact Expectations Statement. We enable this through formal platforms

like the Child in Care Council, SYPAC, consultation events and through their involvement in training of foster carers, recruitment of staff.

These are some of our children and young people's views, shared during 2019/20:

"Children in Care Council has not only been an amazing social experience to talk and get to know more people, but it's also been a rewarding experience to know the work that we do is helping improve the lives of other young people in care".

"The Children in Care Council is an excellent way for young people to advocate for themselves and others in a formal but relaxed environment".

"Children in Care Council represents the best possible way to educate yourself on young people's issues and work together to find creative solutions".

"Children in Care Council is really important, as we all have different viewpoints and can contrast and inform what adults think are best for young people".

"As Children in Care Council members, we have and share personal experiences which are really important in helping to improve life for other young people who don't have a voice or are unable to speak out".

"It's crucial that we are listened too, as young people in care can relate to each other's experiences the most and understand what needs to be done".

"The voice of young people is the advice of the future. Without young people there would not be a future".

"If you want your services to be effective, then it needs to have a young person's touch to help and inform decisions at all levels".

"Being involved in recruitment and selection is really important, it means we can have a real say and influence who is appointed to work with and support us".

Leicestershire Children in Care Council

Contact Expectations Statement



Jane Moore

Jane Moore,
Director Children & Family Services

Ivan Ould

Cllr Ivan Ould
Lead Member for Children & Family Services

our promise
to children in care and care leavers

by Leicestershire County Council and Partners



10197

There were 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, an increase of 75 children 582 children in care on 31st March 2019, representing an increase of 12.9% over the year and continues the upward trend of recent years. 657 is equivalent to 46.8 children per 10,000 population aged 0 to 17 in Leicestershire. This compares to an average of 52.78 children in care children in Statistical Neighbour authorities at 31 March 2019.

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, 373 (56.8%) were looked after under a Full Care Order, which is an increase of 13.4% from 329 Full Care Orders at 31st March 2019. Interim Care Orders have also increased to 91 from 84, this is an increase of 8.3%. The number of children looked after under Section 20 has also increased to 144 as opposed to 115 at 31st March 2019, an increase of 25.2% (the result of change of practice relating to older children aged 16 and 17 years of age).

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, 368 (56%) were male and 289 (44%) were female. This represents a small change between male and female in care as at 31st March 2019. (320 (55%) male and 262 (45%) female). Please see chart below for children in care at 31st March 2020 by age group and gender

2.5 Placement Profile

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, a total of 466 (71%) were placed in foster placements provided by the local authority, other fostering agencies or fostered by a relative or friend. Please see chart below for a summary of children in care by placement type as at 31st March 2020 with a comparison to 31st March 2019.

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, 312 (47.4%) were placed in settings provided by Leicestershire County Council, with 294 (44.9%) supplied by private providers.

The Council supports unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people through a dedicated team of professionals. There has been a steady increase in new arrivals since 2015, reflected below:

- ▶ UASC CIC and Care Leavers November 2015: 55
- ▶ UASC CIC and Care Leavers April 2019: 85
- ▶ UASC CIC and Care Leavers March 2020: 105

All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people are placed in external provision (independent fostering agency foster carers or semi-independent provision).

The reporting period has witnessed a continued increase in the number of children with especially complex needs who are corporately parented in Leicestershire. In 2019/20 this has resulted in an increase in the number of children who find living in foster families difficult and as a result the number and average age profile of children placed in residential care has increased, with the youngest child being 8 years of age.

The overview of placement costs is provided below:

Placement Name	Avg Weekly Cost £	Avg Annual Cost £
SGO	180	9,360
Kinship/Connected	344.5	17,914
Mainstream Foster Care	549	28,548
Pathway Fostering Carer (Specialist)	855	44,460
1/1 Fostering Carer (Specialist)	1075	55,900
IFA	800	41,600
High Cost IFA	1100	57,200
Staying Put	275	14,300

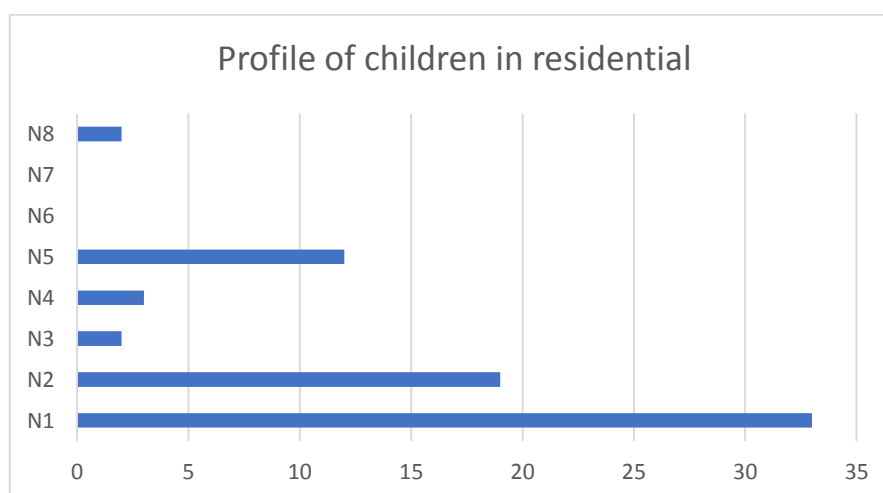
Supported Lodgings - Internal	385	20,020
16 + - External	1250	65,000
Residential - External	4100	213,200

2.6 Children in care/young people profile

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, 368 (56%) were male and 289 (44%) were female. This represents a small change between male and female in care as at 31st March 2019. (320 (55%) male and 262 (45%) female).

Of the 657 children in care at 31st March 2020, 578 (88.0%) were from White ethnic groups. Other ethnic groups are mostly from the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in care, including Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam.

The profile of children requiring residential care is set out below, based on the following descriptors:



N1

Abuse or neglect

Child in need as a result of, or at risk of, abuse or neglect

N2	Child's disability	Child and their family whose main need for children's social care services arises out of the child's disabilities, illness or intrinsic condition
N3	Parental illness or disability	Child whose main need for children's social care services arises because the capacity of their parent(s) or carer(s) to care for them is impaired by disability, illness, mental illness, or addictions
N4	Family in acute stress	Child whose needs arise from living in a family going through a temporary crisis such that parenting capacity is diminished and some of the children's needs are not being adequately met
N5	Family dysfunction	Child whose needs arise mainly out of their living with a family where the parenting capacity is chronically inadequate
N6	Socially unacceptable behaviour	Child and family whose need for children's social care services arises primarily out of their behaviour impacting detrimentally on the community
N7	Low income	Child, either living in a family or independently, whose need for children's social care services arises mainly from being dependent on an income below the standard state entitlements
N8	Absent parenting	Child whose need for children's social care services arises mainly from having no parent(s) available to provide for them. A child whose parent(s) decide it is in the best interest for the child to be adopted would be included in this category

3. PERMANENCE

Permanence is the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and their families from family support through to adoption. It aims to ensure a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that will give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging.

For the purposes of this report, activities and progress against permanence performance indicators are set out in Section 3.

3.1 Stability

Stability of placement for these children is key to improving education and health outcomes in as 'normal' environments as possible:

- 71% of children are placed in family-based placements.
- Of these 45% are placed with in-house carers, connected carers, adopters and parents, 26% with independent agency foster carers.
- Children who have experienced 3 placements or more in the last year was 8.7%. A little higher than last year's figure of 7.7% but still significantly below the statistical neighbour average of 11.9%. This suggests that Children Looked After in Leicestershire, have a high level of placement stability from the point of coming into care. This is significant in achieving long term positive outcomes.
- Children with long term stability (more than 3 years) decreased slightly, from 65% to 62% and remains below the statistical neighbour average of 66%. The complexity of children requiring placement and reduced placement options have had an impact on the indicator and is likely to remain a challenge. Over recent years there has been considerable focus on supporting foster carers to maintain placements, and perhaps as a consequence, the placement stability figure has shown only a small deterioration. We will continue to place an emphasis on supporting foster carers to promote sustained placement stability. However, we have seen an increase in the number of children subject to care orders with plans for long term fostering and we continue to

experience the occasional unplanned ending of seemingly stable placements. We also know that recruitment of permanent foster carers remains a significant challenge and a larger number have decided to retire early or place fostering 'on hold' because they are concerned about the risk of COVID19. We will need to carefully track these individual children to ensure that all possible family finding activity is undertaken.

- On 31 March 2020 41 children subject to an Interim or Full Care Order were living with their parent/s compared to 17 the previous year. This substantial increase is because of the efforts during care proceedings to help parents change their circumstances to enable the return of their children and efforts to return children who have been in care some time home, where parental circumstance has changed.

In 2016, the Dedicated Placements Support Team (DPST) was established to:

- Provide support and improve stability for young people living in foster care who are experiencing difficulties and who present the most challenging behaviour
- Transition children and young people who are already in care, back into independent living;
- Transition children and young people who are already in care, back into independent living;
- Provide support to specialist foster placements where a more intensive support package is required
- Work with parents where children placed under Placement with Parent regulations, and foster carers to prevent breakdown and support re-unification.

The presenting needs of the children and young people include attachment needs (how young people's life experiences can impact of their behaviour), difficulties in

accepting boundaries and routines, mental health and safeguarding (young people not being aware of the dangers and putting themselves in risky situations).

DPST has five support workers, three social workers supporting placements and a dedicated worker for recruiting and supporting Independent Visitors.

Each worker has a different skill set and shares their experiences and knowledge across the team to improve outcomes for children and placement stability. They hold small caseloads to ensure availability when the child or carer needs additional support.

Key markers of success:

- Since the creation of this team placement stability (number of foster placements in the past year) has improved by 7%.
- Recruited and supported 5 specialist carers (Pathway and One2One carers)
- Increased supported lodgings (internal semi-independent provision) to 27 places (23 providers)
- Introduced a Staying Put support offer to carers (there are 35 Young People living in Staying Put arrangements, an increase of 24 since last year)
- Increased the Independent Visitors (IV) provision to 40. We are very proud of the developments in this area over the past two years which includes:
 - *Full time IV coordinator appointed and started the role in March 20*
 - *We currently have 40 independent visitors*
 - *We have 9 independent visitors awaiting a match*
 - *We have 23 potential IV's awaiting assessment*
 - *We have 9 children waiting for allocation of an IV*
 - *2 Out of County children matched, 2 out of county needing a match*
 - *We have established a network event for independent visitors, these will run 3 times a year*
 - *Clear policy & procedure for the scheme established*
 - *Promoted the scheme through, Facebook, LCC website and face to face events*
 - *Provided training through LCC fostering service*
 - *Updated leaflets*

- *Attended regional IV networking events to share good practice*

In April 2019 the Service received the following commendation from the National Independent Visitors Network about Leicestershire's Independent Visitor's provision:

'Your in-house IV services are doing the best from all the in-house services in England! Congratulations and a huge well done to you all!'

The Fostering Service also offers a mentoring scheme for foster carers. The aim is to improve the confidence and knowledge of carers as rapidly as possible through linking new to more experienced carers, hence contributing to the quality of care provision and a child's sense of security.

Over the year 26 applicants were contacted and in total, 24 applicants responded. 21 of these indicated that they wanted a mentor. 19 matches were made and following agreement meetings, 12 agreed to proceed with mentoring.

Leicestershire's foster carers are central to the progress children in care make in all avenues of their development and emotional wellbeing. Engagement with carers is essential. The services need to know what our carers think and what is important to them to best meet the needs of CiC. We listen to them through Leicestershire Foster Carers Association, Locality Support Groups, the annual survey and carers forum which offers opportunities for discussion.

This is a sample of other events supported by the service to ensure children in care receive the best possible care:

- ✓ Targeted recruitment of foster carers to ensure we have the right carers to meet our children's needs
- ✓ Annual revised training programme based on the profile of children in care and carers needs, including self-service access to training for a range of courses
- ✓ Locality support groups and social activities
- ✓ Facebook site for the exchange of information and ideas
- ✓ The introduction of a carers reports for children's Review of Arrangements, giving carers a greater voice in these meetings
- ✓ Development of Enhanced Carers (level 4) allowing carers the opportunity for professional development and recognising the additional skills some carers demonstrate and require in their fostering role to parent therapeutically
- ✓ The introduction of a dedicated permanence social worker for children who are not yet living in their permanent foster homes
- ✓ Annual Celebration event

- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Sons and Daughters events.

3.2 Permanence in Foster Care

Permanence Panel has been monitoring the achievement of permanence for all children who are in care. The Panel has a quality assurance function - ensuring that plans are clear and focused and there are timely decisions in securing a permanent care arrangement. Panel aims to improve the life chances of children by ensuring carers and children have access to the appropriate support services to meet the needs of the child now and in the future.

The following progress has been made in achieving 'certainty about living arrangements' and in ensuring management oversight of permanence:

A senior manager at Head of Service level has been appointed as the responsible officer for ensuring that children have what we call permanence decisions. This decision is different to the child's review, chaired by the IRO, confirming that permanence in long term care is the right plan for a child. The decision made by Permanence Panel, chaired by the responsible officer, is that the child's carers are the right carers to meet their needs now and, in the future, and that they have the right support and training in place to do this.

By July 2020 the number of children with a permanence decision had risen to 169, The number of children without a permanence decision but with management oversight, evidencing tracking and monitoring, had increased to 192. 31 had had permanence considered by panel, but permanence was not agreed.

274 have no permanence decision endorsed by Permanence Panel, but of these:

- 71 children are subject to Section 20 of the Children Act and have recently been subject to an audit to identify that appropriate decisions are being made for them and they have legal permanence. Through this audit 3 were identified as requiring further consideration and will be presented to the key decision-making meeting through which legal advice will be obtained.

- 102 are subject to Interim Care Order, so permanence is still be considered via the court process.
- 1 young person is in a Remand setting
- 62 are subject of Full Care order. Legal status is secure and care plan agreed.
- 38 are subject to a Placement Order and adoption is being activity pursued.

The 62 children subject to Full Care Orders will be considered by the Head of Service in the next quarter to ensure appropriate permanence decisions are made.

3.3. Permanence in Adoption:

In relation to adoption, the achievement of permanence has been relatively stable:

- There were 31 children adopted in 2019/2020.
- The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (Adoption Scorecard indicator A1) was 487 days, a decrease of 56 days from 543 reported for 2018/19. The total 3 year average for this indicator from 2018 to 2020 is 464 days.
- The average time between placement order and match to adoptive family (Adoption Scorecard indicator A2) was 220 days an increase of 6 days from 214 days reported for 2018/19. The total 3 year average for this indicator from 2018 to 2020 is 192 days.
- Of 151 children who had been adopted in the last 3 years or were in the adoption process at the end of March 2020, 74 (49%) had waited/were waiting less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (Adoption Scorecard indicator A3).

Other adoption successes as of 31 March 2020 include:

- 15 placed for adoption (Placement Order)
- 31 adoption orders granted
- 28 adopters approved
- 31 adopters in assessment
- Sibling group of 4 placed
- Two sibling groups of 3 matched

3.4 Permanence through Kinship Care:

Kinship care is where a child or young person who is 'looked after' lives full-time or most of the time with a relative or family friend because they are not able to live with their birth parents.

There are two primary routes into the 'looked after' system. The first being accommodated under section 20 Children Act 1989 and the second being made the subject of a Care Order under section 31 Children Act 1989. Under section 20, children and young people can be 'accommodated' with the consent of those with parental responsibility. If the young person is 16 or 17 years old, they do not need the consent of those with Parental responsibility in order to be accommodated by the Local Authority.

The Kinship Team manages assessments of prospective kinship carers or those carers who already have a child in placement under Regulation 24. Regulation 24 allows for and regulates the immediate placement of a looked after child with a relative or friend, who has not been previously approved as a foster carer via the usual processes, if it is deemed to be in the child's best interest to do so.

Leicestershire remains at the forefront of using kinship placements, and, at year end, 21% of all looked after children/young people were in such placements. This contrasts with a national rate of 11.5%.

However, the increasing number of kinship placements and the disparity with the national rate, may be linked to the reduced number of Special Guardianship Orders being agreed in care proceedings in Leicestershire.

3.5 ENTRY, EXIT INTO CARE, INCLUDING COURT PROCEEDINGS

There were 245 admissions of children into care during 2019/20 compared to 207 recorded in 2018/19, an increase of 18.4%. 150 (61.2%) of the 245 admissions to care in the year were under Section 20.

Of the 245 children who were admitted to care in 2019/20, 21 had a previous permanence option such as adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement order (residence order).

There were 170 who ceased to be looked after in 2019/20. 47 (27.6%) of the 170 children leaving care in the year went to live with parents or relatives.

31 Adoption orders and 27 Placement Orders were granted during the period.

Proceedings resulted in the making of the following number of final orders –

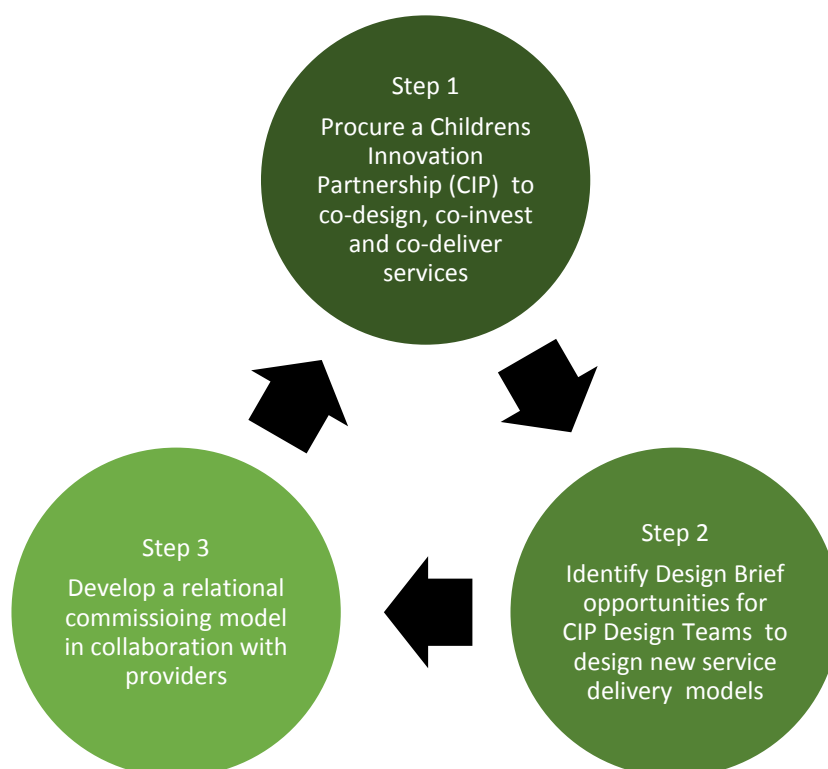
Type of Order	2018-19	2019-20
Full Care Order	61	76
Placement Order	31	27
Supervision Order	32	26
Special Guardianship Order	35	17
Child Arrangement Order	18	19

3.6 Next steps:

One of the financial challenges facing the Children and Families Service is a national 'market sufficiency' issue with providing good value-for-money residential placements for looked after children with a multiplicity of complex needs.

In response to this challenge and the wider challenges impacting the department the Care Placement strategy was developed which sets out a whole system approach to managing interactions with children, from early contact through to their leaving care.

To make a whole system change and to design and deliver needs led local services to improve outcomes for local children the CFS Department acknowledged that it would need to take a more innovative commissioning approach as outlined in the three steps below.



In response to placement sufficiency challenges, financial pressures and market inflexibility the council wanted to design and procure a partnership model for an external partner to jointly design and deliver services for young people on the edge of care, in care and leaving care.

The concept of a Children's Innovation Partnership (CIP) was developed with a vision to procure a partnership, rather than a service, and for the partner to be able to co-invest, co-design and co-deliver innovative, flexible, responsive services to support Leicestershire's children and families.

The partner organisation, Barnardos, was selected to bring its expertise, experience, investment and flexibility to the design and delivery of children's services and to work alongside Leicestershire children and family services.

The initial priority was a review of residential care. In January 2019 the Residential Care and a Specialist Design Team was established. The following proposals are being put forward for 2020/21, the details of which are attached as Appendix 2:

Development of a "Hub", which will accommodate the Assessment and Resource Team (ART).

This will deliver a peripatetic support service comprising a range of social work, medical and psychological professionals known as the **ART** team. This team will undertake child and young person assessment of need and identify appropriate resources required to ensure "right placement first time". The team will also provide wraparound services to support local residential provision, to share risk as appropriate.

Development of Assessment Beds (AB'S) attached to the Hub

The ART and Hub will work to contain the anxiety and distress that children exhibit at the point of family or placement breakdown. They will help the child to feel safe, emotionally contained through clear, consistent boundaries and predictable nurturing routines. The **Hub** will accommodate 3 specialist beds for assessment of need, delivered by the **ART**.

Development of Multi-Functional Properties (MFPs) to accommodate the flexibility required to meet changing need and demand.

These properties will be unregulated but will be staffed by appropriately qualified professionals to meet the individual needs of the residents. The provision will work to a recognised kite mark of quality to give assurances for an unregulated service.

4. EDUCATION AND ATTAINMENT

The Leicestershire Virtual School celebrates the success of all our children and promotes practice that leads to positive outcomes for children; our maxim is “Success for All”.

The Virtual Head's Termly Reports were presented to the Education of Children in Care Strategy Group on the 2 March 2020 and 10th July 2020. The following information provides an overview of education and attainment.

4.1 Profile of children and schools

There are currently 64 children in care in Early Years Settings / Nurseries and in Years 12-13 there are a total of 179 young people, 76 of whom are care leavers.

In line with statutory guidance, when seeking a place for looked-after children, schools judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' are prioritised. Occasionally a school rated 'Requiring Improvement' may be selected on the basis that the VS has identified qualities in the school that will better support the child in question e.g. excellent pastoral support based on proven understanding of attachment and trauma.

When a school is inspected and drops out of Good or Outstanding, the VS considers the benefit or detriment to the child of changing school and advises the social worker accordingly.

As at 19 June 334 (82.27%) of current children in care of statutory school age are being educated in an Outstanding or Good school according to Ofsted and 50 (78.13%) of current early years children in care are being educated in Outstanding or Good settings.

231/416 (55.7%) have an identified Special Educational Need (SEN): 97 (23.4% of the whole cohort) are in receipt of SEN Support in school and 118 (28.4% of the whole cohort) have an EHCP, 16 (3.9% of the whole cohort) are undergoing assessment for an EHCP.

4.2 Quality of Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The PEP is a statutory requirement for children in care from the age of 3 years and if in education provision up to the age of 18. It is part of the child's Care Plan which the local authority has a legal duty to maintain with PEPs being reviewed three times a year (termly); a PEP should go no longer than six months without review.

The continuing increase in numbers of children in care means that there have been more PEP meetings to complete, over 50 more than for the same term in 2019. 402 PEP meetings took place during the 12 weeks of spring term 2019 compared with 407 during the 15 weeks of autumn term 2019. The number of PEPs being held in the spring term has increased 123.3% since 2016 from 180 to 402.

The VS is gradually moving responsibility for chairing and recording of PEPs to schools, who wrote up 28 more PEPs in Spring term 2020 than they did in Spring term 2019 (34.2% of the total number of PEPs compared with 30.7%).

Complex needs of children entering care often requires the involvement at the PEP of a VS education improvement officer (EIO) and when it is not practical to attend a PEP meeting, their specialist support can be delivered into a meeting via Skype. After lockdown commenced, PEP meetings continued on the dates agreed, but were instead held as Skype meetings.

EIOs, designated teachers (DT) and social workers are now all familiar with the process of completing meetings by Skype/phone and this format will remain the norm for the foreseeable future.

The quality of PEP documents is still a focus for the VS and 30.9% of PEPs written up by schools in the spring term had to have some remedial action to bring them up to standard. The situation has been exacerbated by the increasing quantity of PEPs that have to be completed and quality assured.

Leicestershire County Council

Leicestershire Virtual School

PRIMARY

Personal Education Plan

Name: Year

Date:

More PEP documents are being returned promptly by schools, with the average number of days for a school to return the PEP document to the Virtual School decreasing from 5.3 days in autumn term 2019 to 4.8 days in spring term 2020.

All children are encouraged to contribute to their PEPs, either by attending the meeting or by submitting their written Pupil Views pages, preferably both.

4.3 The use of Pupil Premium Plus

The Virtual School Head has a statutory responsibility to manage Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) funding for looked after children and ensure it is used without delay for the benefit of the looked-after child's educational needs as described in their personal education plan (PEP). DfE has confirmed that the grant for looked after children has increased for 2020-21 to £2,345 per eligible pupil from the previous amount of £2,300.

The VS top-slices £400 from each allocation, to create a pooled source of funding. The remaining £1,945 of each eligible child's PPP will be transferred to schools on a termly basis, on receipt of a plan linked to the child/young person's PEP targets, detailing how the school intends to use it, including the costings and intended outcomes.

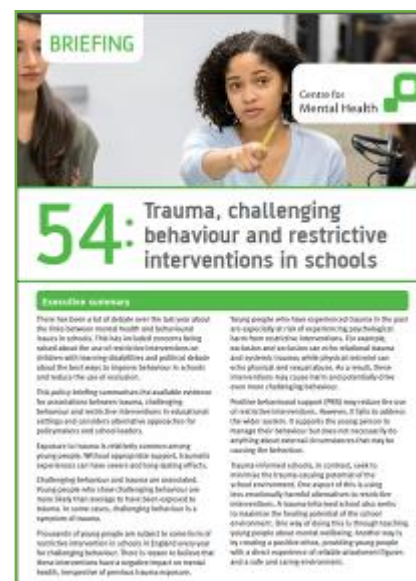
The Virtual School monitors the use and impact of all PPP allocations closely, ensuring that schools allocate funding to interventions that support and improve educational outcomes of children. If needs are identified that require more than the initial £1,945 allocation, schools can apply through the child's allocated EIO for top-up from the centrally-held, pooled PPP; this enables funding to be allocated where it is needed most.

4.4 Promoting inclusive behaviour (Trauma, challenging behaviour and restrictive interventions in schools, The Centre for Mental Health Briefing)

This briefing, published in January 2020 focuses on restrictive interventions in schools (such as seclusion, restraint and exclusion), and highlights the way they can exacerbate distress and behavioural problems among children who have experienced trauma.

It examines the links between trauma and challenging behaviour and highlights the way restrictive interventions can create a vicious circle of trauma, challenging behaviour, restriction and psychological harm.

There are a number of alternative approaches to challenging behaviour in schools which are less likely to exacerbate trauma. These include positive behavioural support and creating trauma-informed schools as recommended by the Timpson Exclusion report (2019), statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children' (2018), NICE Pathways – 'Attachment difficulties in children and young' (2019).



The Centre for Mental Health Briefing calls on the Government to strengthen its take on trauma-informed approaches in schools and how to manage behaviour, to ensure all children feel valued and understood.

The Leicestershire Virtual School has a successful training programme for schools, social workers and carers, promoting attachment awareness, understanding of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed practice including emotion coaching and the key adult learning module (KALM).

The February 2020 VS conference further promoted an attachment aware ethos in schools with over forty schools in attendance.

<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/trauma-behaviour-restrictive-interventions-schools>

4.5 Promoting confidence and attainment (participation events)

The Virtual School plans, staffs and recruits for aspirational educational trips and events for children in care. Each trip is aimed at an identified age range, either as support for the academic curriculum or to reward or encourage greater engagement in education and career planning. They give children and young people the opportunity to do activities that they might not otherwise experience, and the VS

makes every effort to ensure that the activities cater for a wide range of interests and abilities.

The 2019 VS Creative Writing Project was highly successful and continues to generate interest across the country. 145 copies had been sold up to 14th February 2020 and the book was featured in a Bookseller (online trade website) article and was featured by the Fostering Network in one of their publications.

Following on from the success of the 2019 **Virtual School Calendar**, the 2020 calendar was published and sold out within a couple of weeks. There had been over forty entries from our children on the theme of the natural world.



Maths Inspiration is a national programme of interactive maths lecture shows for 14-17year olds, which gives them the chance to experience the UK's most inspiring maths speakers live in theatres, presenting mathematics in the context of exciting, real-world applications. On 12th November six young people were accompanied to the **Maths Inspiration Show** in Birmingham, followed by a trip to the **Think Tank Science Museum, Birmingham**.

On 22nd November De Montfort University hosted a **Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Day** attended by virtual school pupils. The day was spent addressing all sorts of engineering challenges, including maneuvering robots around a map full of 'snow', how to break into a vault and inventing their own unique sports energy drink.



On the 7th December the Virtual School held a **glass workshop** event for young people who have a keen interest in art and the art industry. They designed and made their own working glass clocks, discovering new skills and gaining new knowledge.

At the point of Covid19 lockdown, there had been a range of events in planning: Primary University Inspiration Day; Glass workshop to produce a group piece of art; Prepare for Year 7 (including arts and crafts and animal care); First Aid Workshop; Zoo Animal Handling and Educational Workshop. These have had to be put on hold until travel and social distancing rules are eased.

Reports on all VS Participation events can be seen in the Latest News section of the VS website:

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-virtual-school>

Newsletters

Fostering News (produced by the LCC Fostering team) features a regular contribution from the VS, as do editions of Special Guardianship Orders News (produced by Special Guardianship Support and Permanence Teams), and the Adoption newsletter. The VS submits notices to governors' briefings and Head teachers' briefings (produced by Education Quality and Inclusion service).

The VS and Corporate Parenting have produced a joint newsletter that is sent direct to all our pupils/students and a consultation is being launched by the participation team to find out from children and young people what shape communication with them should take.



Book Clubs and Parcels:

Bookworm, Boomerang and Letterbox book parcels continue to be sent out to Leicestershire children in care of school age, up to year 7. Anecdotal feedback gathered at primary PEPs is positive.

In addition, children aged 0-5 receive monthly book parcels from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and feedback from Early years PEPs has also been positive.

In order to get the most from the reading packs, carers are encouraged to read with their children and motivate them to engage with reading as an essential, fun and rewarding activity. This message is being reinforced by Caring About Reading who started a pilot programme with eight carers, delivering three sessions to each that encourage them to engage in reading with their children. Strategies are shared that promote understanding of text and deliver advice on how to sustain an interest in reading.

Carer feedback:

“LC loves reading new stories. Her favourite books are Jack and the Beanstalk – “I like the cow in it” - and Gracie Leroo. LC loves receiving her book parcels and looks forward to them arriving. She will read books at any opportunity”

“TM loves getting her parcels and particularly liked the Elves and the shoemakers. She loves playing schools with Grandma and using the books.”

“CW loved the Guinness Book of Records and showed a real interest.”

4.6 Attendance:

Monitoring of attendance in school is undertaken daily with the support of data provided by Welfare Call. Up to and including 20th March 2020 (the point of lockdown), the overall Virtual School attendance was 93.70% a rise of 1.3% on the same point in the year in 2018/19.

4.7 Key Stage test and examination results 2018-19:

Test and examination results are for children who had been in care for at least 12 months prior to 31st March 2019.

Early Years results for children achieving a ‘good level of development’ are the same as for 2018 (33%). The 2018-19 cohort features 12 eligible children, each one representing 8.3% of the whole cohort. There is much movement with this cohort, as children enter care and exit care more rapidly.

Key Stage one results in 2019 are based on 18 children, each one representing 5.56%. 4/18 (22.2%) achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 46.15% in 2018. However, 10/18 (55%) of the 2019 cohort had SEN

compared with 2018 when there was a total of 13 children of whom 5 (38.5%) had SEN.

KS2 results are pleasing, with 7/19 (36.8%) achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared with 31.8% in 2018.

KS4 results showed many individual successes. Of the 40 eligible children, 30 were in state-funded schools (on which national data is based). 4/30 (13.3%) achieved grade 9 – 5, and 10/30 (33.3%) achieved grade 9 – 4 in both English and maths. This compares with 6.7% and 20% respectively in 2018.

5. HEALTH OF children in care

5.1. Context

The '*Corporate Parent*' is the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, to provide best possible care and safeguarding for each looked after child/young person.

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, '*Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children*', designated and named health professionals are appointed in Leicestershire. It is the responsibility of the Designated Doctor for CiC and Designated Nurse for CiC to ensure that every child in care has timely access to their statutory health assessments, and that a care plan is formulated to address all identified health needs.

The health service responsible for the completion of health assessments for the child in care is provided by the health provider for Leicestershire Partnership Trust, who work closely with the children's social care team, including the independent reviewing officers.

Children in care are at greater risk of poor physical and emotional health outcomes than their peers. A health needs assessment (HNA) is published annually and summaries the population-based data on the health of Looked after Children. This rich information enables the identification of key recommendations to improve health outcomes for these children and young people.

5.2 Key health outcomes for children in care

The following table summarises the key health outcomes for children and young people who have been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March which has increased by 11.1% from 415 in 2019 to 459 in 2020.

Please see comparison tables below for headline results on offending, health and dental recording:

Return Year	Total children looked after for at least 12 months	% of children convicted during year	% of children appropriately immunized	% of children their teeth checked by a dentist*	% of children who have had their annual health assessment
2020	459	1.45%	415 90.4%	402 87.6%	422 91.9%
2019	413	2.42%	340 82.3%	379 91.8%	340 82.3%
Return Year	% of children identified as having a substance misuse problem	% of children who received an intervention for substance misuse problem	% of children who were offered an intervention for substance misuse problem		
2020	3.27%	1.82%	1.09%		
2019	4.35%	2.17%	1.45%		

*Some children will be under 12 months of age and therefore will not have seen a dentist

There are 68 children who have been CiC for 12 months+ as at 31/3/20 and are aged 0-4 for whom a health surveillance check would be looked for, so our percentage of completion for this measure is 81%.

Analysis of the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) and Review Health Assessment (RHA) data in 2018/19 showed positive changes in access to health services and the uptake of essential services for this CiC population between the time they entered care at the IHA and when their health was reviewed at the RHA. The improvements in health included increased registration with a dentist, improved immunisation status, a higher consumption of fruit and vegetables than their peers and better levels of physical activity than their peer group.

Audits completed by the Leicestershire Partnership Trust for 2019/20 demonstrate high levels of compliance with GP registration, dentist registration, Dental appointments, optician registration and uptake and immunisations.

Review Health Assessments (RHA) are carried out by nurses for all CiC as per the Statutory Guidance (DoH, DfE 2015). Public Health nurses/health visitors carry out the RHA every 6 months after the IAH for CiC aged 0 – 4 and CiC nurses carry out an annual RHA for CiC aged 5 – 18 (every 12 months after the IAH). The RHA annual audit aims to address any variance in the quality of these assessments and address any required improvements. The 2019/20 Quality Review of record keeping and RHAs to determine the quality and improvement activity required. The review demonstrated the follow strengths and developmental areas:

Areas of good practice

- Emotional health assessments are evident in the RHA record. Carers and CiC are directed to resources to support emotional well-being or offered additional LAC nurse visits.
- CiC have their safety needs discussed and appropriate advice given to keep them safe
- Carers and CiC are directed to resources to support healthy relationships and resilience or offered additional CiC nurse visits
- Public health nurses/health visitors use research-based assessment tools to assess development and social skills.
- Recommendations in the health plan are child/ young person focussed, use a quality standard of SMART plans.
- In 2018/19, the date of completion of the RHA depends on referral being timely from the Local Authority.
- In 2018/19 it was identified that the following was needed - a greater focus within the RHA of holistic assessment of the developmental progress and physical health of the child/ young person using appropriate developmental assessment tools as needed. Monthly record keeping audits have been introduced to address this and report to staff immediately.

Areas for improvement

- Groups and relationships recorded on health systems need to be more accurate including parental responsibility. T.

- The RHA needs to demonstrate that the health history over the last 6 or 12 months has been reviewed, assessed, chronologically recorded and is then reflected in the RHA health care plan and recommended actions; in both cohorts.
- All CiC however young, need oral and dental health advice given to them and their carers at every RHA and information included in the health care plan.
- Where a weight, height or BMI is not possible (some CiC refuse to be measured) an overview of appearance and whether the weight of the young person appears healthy or if weight and growth has been a health issue in the past or the present should be recorded.
- The Leaving Care Health Summaries should be discussed at the RHA with all CiC over the age of 16 years.

The strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) measure emotional well-being and is an indicator of future mental health problems. There is a statutory requirement for the SDQ to be completed annually where a child has been in care for 12 months continuously and is aged 4 – 16 years.

The SDQ examines 25 attributes, divided between 5 scales:

- Emotional problems
- Conduct problems
- Hyperactivity and inattention
- Peer relationship problems
- Prosocial behaviours (Excluded from Total Difficulties score)

A **total difficulties score** is calculated using the SDQ, which ranges from 0-40.

Each 1-point increase in the total difficulties score corresponds with an *increase in the risk* of developing a mental health disorder. Scores are also provided for each of the 5 scales. Looking at the profile of scores is particularly useful in terms of making decisions about the appropriate type and level of support, particularly if a child is scoring significantly higher in one area.

Scores between 0-13 are deemed average, 14-16 slightly raised, 17-19 high and 20-40 deemed very high.

The average SDQ for CiC has remained constant for 2018/19 and 2019/20 – 14.

Leicestershire eligible (children aged 4 – 16 years) CiC Scoring breakdown:

0-13 Average -	99
14-16 Slightly raised	13
17-19 High	8
20-40 Very High	27

Range of score: 0-31

Whilst the annual SDQ completion rate remains high (83%), the Review demonstrated that the SDQ was usually not available at the RHA.

It is widely recognised that some Children and Young People have additional mental health needs. Leicestershire, Leicester, Rutland (LLR) and the local NHS organisation jointly commission the CAMHS Young People's Team (YPT) to provide enhanced specialist support to vulnerable children and young people with mental health disorders who are:

- ✓ Adopted
- ✓ Looked After
- ✓ Young Offenders
- ✓ Homeless
- ✓ Other children and young people placed by other local authorities within LLR

And

- ✓ Their families and staff working with the vulnerable groups.

The YPT will provide additional mental health interventions to CYP in the vulnerable groups outlined above. The aims and objectives of the service are to

- Provide a mental health assessment, formulation and intervention service for CYP in the groups above who are referred to Specialist CAMHS
- Provide specialist input to the corresponding social care systems to support children and families with identified mental health need

- Facilitate the workforce to develop a better understanding of mental health issues in general and specific issues for vulnerable children and young people via advice, consultation and training.
- Engage with families to ensure that mental health problems are identified and treated early.

Achieving these aims increase awareness of mental health and well-being to build confidence and competence of staff in the teams and offer an enhanced service to children and young people who are in contact with these teams.

6. CHILDREN AT RISK OF MISSING, CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)

Looked after children/young people are particularly vulnerable to safeguarding risks– they are more likely to go missing and are at an increased risk of being trafficked and exploited.

High numbers of children are placed from other areas within Leicestershire residential care homes, although these placements enable movement away from the high-risk environment, the potential for Child Exploitation continues as abusers may follow the young person to their new home. Looked After service providers need to engage with children and young people, developing relationships that enable identification, and appropriate response to such risks of Child including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).

Leicestershire County Council Social Care staff became co-located with the Police in September 2014. Leicestershire Police had already brought together several safeguarding functions within the force to consolidate its response to CSE and Missing Children. Due to the subsequent growth of the multi-agency team it relocated to South Wigston Police Station, which also houses the Child Abuse Investigation Unit.

Leicestershire County Council Social Care staff are represented within the unit replicating the enhanced response to CSE and Missing for cases of Domestic

Abuse. The Out of Hours service is also embedded within the hub. This approach provides an environment that encourages collaborative information sharing and combined risk assessment, resulting in live time activity currently led jointly by Social Care and the Police.

All referrals are triaged from the respective authorities' front doors. A daily partnership risk assessment meeting is convened to identify risk and response to children. A weekly information sharing meeting considers all open cases graded at High MED risk and identifies strategies, trigger plans and cases for escalation. A monthly partnership strategic meeting is chaired by the DCI to interrogate data, themes and multiple investigations. A team of social workers work in full cooperation with police officers to offer expertise, joint risk management from disclosure of offence, investigation, preparation and familiarisation for judicial process and ongoing recovery support. The team works hand in hand with fieldwork teams and has a particular connection to the Children in Care Service and the listening support service who offer independent return interviews.

The Child Criminal Exploitation Operations Group reports to the Vulnerability Executive Board, a sub group of the Strategic Partnership Board. Members of the Operations Group are at Assistant Director, Head of Service and Strategic levels. Members of the Executive Board are at Director and Deputy Chief Constable Level.

In November 2019 Leicestershire County Council launched our Child Criminal Exploitation Framework 2019-2021. This has now been adopted as the East Midlands Child Criminal Exploitation framework.

A new multi-agency 38 strong team of experts represent the "National County Lines Coordination Centre" supported by the National Crime Agency are working to develop the national intelligence picture of the complexity and scale of the threat. There are more than 1000 lines in operation nationally with links to increasing levels of serious violence. We have seen over 200 people arrested for drug related offences during weeks of intensification under Operation Lionheart. We saw significant convictions for some young adults. This inevitably left gaps within the drugs manufacturing and distribution model; intelligence tells us that younger family

members have plugged the gaps in the market. We are aware that we may see an increase in the level of violence as some of the initial instigators are due for release. We continue to monitor this activity collaboratively with neighbourhood police, community safety and our colleagues in YOS.

Our collaborative approach in the Charnwood district to identify those at risk; and those vulnerable to recruitment, locally by organised crime groups. CCE is devastating leaving families isolated, and communities living in fear. The threat of violence including sexual violence is common and the bind of debt bondage coercive and intimidation integral to gain compliance and territorial control. We are committed to learn more about the cohort of children, why they are members of gangs and how to keep them safe.

The Ofsted inspection of children's social care services took place in September 2019. In relation to exploitation, the inspection found that:

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.

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.

6.1 Child Exploitation

In Leicestershire there is an operational multi-agency child exploitation team and missing called the Vulnerability Hub. The agencies meet regularly. These meetings are the forum for discussing, mapping, and analyzing concerns and for identifying

solutions for all children/young people who are thought to be at risk of child exploitation, including children in care who may be at risk.

Locally gathered information indicates a stabilization of numbers regarding need, although information for child criminal exploitation is only available for 2020. The following provides an overview of need by year:

CSE Referrals-

2017	297
2018	247
2019	314
2020	259

Child Criminal Exploitation-

2020	140
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CSE Referrals GENDER –

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Female	243	173	211	184
Male	54	66	102	74
Not recorded	0	8	0	0
Transgender	0	0	1	1

CCE Referrals GENDER –

	2020
Female	13
Male	27
Not recorded	0
Transgender	0

6.2 Children Reported Missing

There are no exact figures for the number of children who go missing or run away but estimates suggest that the figure is in the region of 100,000 per year². Children may run away *from* a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or *to* somewhere they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25 per cent of children and young people that go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Looked after children missing from their placements are particularly vulnerable. (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, DfE, 2014).

The Ofsted report 'Missing Children' published in February 2013 on local authorities' work in relation to children missing from home and care highlighted a number of concerns. These were that:

- risk management plans for individual looked after children were often not developed or acted on;
- placement instability was a key feature of looked after children who ran away;
- reports about looked after children missing from their care placement were not routinely provided to senior managers in local authorities; and
- there was little evidence that safe and well checks or return interviews were taking place.

The Ofsted inspection of children's social care services took place in September 2019. The inspection found the experience of children and care leavers to be good overall. Specifically, in relation to children missing from care, the report set out that:

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.

Locally gathered information evidences continued close monitoring and

sharing of information about children who go missing from home or care and that numbers remain relatively stable. The following provides an overview of need by year:

Children who are not in care who go missing-

	2019	2020
Total children missing	510	495
Total number of episodes	743	734

Children who are in care who go missing-

	2019	2020
Total number of Leicestershire children	98	96
Total number of non-Leicestershire children	130	160
Total number of episodes for Leicestershire children	335	264
Total number episodes for non-Leicestershire children	407	370

Missing episodes decreased over the year. The use of a Safeguarding & Missing Coordinator and performance reports are used to scope all missing episodes and contacts and to prompt the allocated social worker to complete a return interview. The coordinator offers advice on technique and responds to any intelligence to build a picture of the rational for the missing episode, the incentive and possible alternatives and resolutions to intercept future episodes. The information gathered from the interviews assists the social worker to develop the care plan and to manage future risk. The completion of

return interviews has improved year on year - in quarter 1 of 2019/20 75 were completed; in quarter 1 of 2020/21 161 were completed. Return interviews are mostly completed within 72 hours - in quarter 1 of 2019/20 65 of 75 were completed within 72 hours; in quarter 1 of 2020/21 all were completed within 72 hours.

7. CARE LEAVERS

Our vision is that Leicestershire is the best place for children, young people and their families.

We aim to be the best performing local authority in the country against well-defined ambitions and measures, and where we are not yet there we will set stretching targets for annual improvement.

We believe in being open and inclusive. To this effect, our Care Leavers play a key role in shaping the service and holding the authority to account for our actions. We are ambitious for our children and young people and we strive to ensure the outcomes we achieve are the best.

To our Care Leavers:

We want you to succeed in every part of your journey and

we are proud to be your corporate parents.

Local development and implementation of the Care Leaver Offer

Leicestershire County Council is committed to making Leicestershire the best place to live for all its children, specifically recognising the vulnerability of Care Leavers.

As such an ambitious improvement journey for 2019-2021 that will build on progress to date and it based on the views of young people in care and key partners gathered during 2018 has been launched.

The Ofsted inspection of children's social care services took place in September 2019. The inspection found the experience of children and care leavers to be good overall. Regarding services to care leavers, Ofsted wrote:

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.

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.

Following visits by the government's national advisor for care leavers in February 2019 and November 2019 to meet with senior leaders and staff to review our work with care leavers, Leicestershire was identified as one the top 10 performing authorities in terms of progress made against recommendations.

7.2 Corporate Parenting – driving the new promise and ambition for care leavers

The lead Member, Councillor Ivan Ould OBE CC has been instrumental in driving and embedding corporate parenting responsibility. For many years, Councillor Ould has been an advocate for children in care and care leavers. He co-chairs Corporate

Parenting Board with a child in care, ensuring that children and young people panel members are supported and effectively contribute to Leicestershire's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

During 2018 Councillor Ould continued his efforts to engender understanding, empathy and ambition for Leicestershire's Care Leavers across the Council. He proactively sought to establish a 5-member panel (Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Board) who now serve to:

- Learn about the needs of all Children in Care and Care Leavers and educate other officers and members
- Challenge officers on the service that is delivered and outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Advocate on behalf of Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Board has been presented with the summaries of the mapping undertaken during 2018 that sets out the Children's Social Care and other agencies strengths, developmental areas and the ambitions. They have committed to three events during the year in which they will have direct contact with children in care and Care Leavers to understand their lived experience and to understand priorities to improve their lives. Members started pushing within their districts to achieve full council tax exemption across all districts and are advocating for housing applications to be accepted at age 17.5 years or younger.

North West Leicestershire District Council – 21 January 2019

"No council tax for care leavers"

Under the new North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) council tax discount scheme, people leaving care and the households they live in will pay no council tax until they are 25.

Support to Children in Care and Care Leavers is a priority for the Council and the Leader of the Council – Councillor Nick Rushton, Corporate Portfolio Holder at NWLDC, said:

“We understand that the transition out of care for young people can be a stressful and problematic time for many. Without the support of a family or the experience of managing their own finances, care leavers can be more susceptible to debt.

“We are pleased to give financial support to these young people by reducing their council tax bill to zero until the age of 25 and we hope this gives them a bit of a boost while they establish themselves outside of the care system.”

This policy has been implemented with immediate effect.

In September 2019 the District Housing Executive committee accept the proposed changes to the new Housing Protocol:

- Includes Council Tax exemptions
- Includes corporate parenting principles as the guiding principles.

Highlights that in 2019 Leicestershire partners came together to make a commitment and promise to children in care and care leavers. These underpin the behaviours expected from all partners making this commitment, which are -

- ✓ We will support you
 - ✓ We will respect your identify
 - ✓ We will listen to you
 - ✓ We believe in you
 - ✓ We will support you to find a place you can call home
 - ✓ We will inform you
 - ✓ We will be a lifelong champion
- Sets out that care leavers will automatically have a local connection with all districts within Leicestershire meaning they should be eligible to go on any housing registers.
 - Sets out that Care Leavers over the age of 16 can join the Local Housing Authority Housing register, but if under 18 they would not be permitted to bid for

properties until they are ready for independent living and there is an agreement in place for a responsible adult or agency to hold the tenancy in trust until they turn 18.

7.3 Care Leavers – outcomes for 2019/20

a. Accommodation and preparation to live independently

The *commissioning of 16+ provisions* is overseen by the Assistant Director and Head of Service for Children in Care to ensure that suitable accommodation and appropriate care packages are in place, acknowledging that preparing young people during these 2 years (16-18 years) is critical. The Head of Service reviews complex packages of care three times a year to ensure young people are safe and making progress. Outcomes are shared with SMT to ensure learning is in place. The Family Placement Team (the commissioning service) ensures that providers are meeting appropriate standards through regular visits to the properties and where appropriate, through contract management meetings.

For many young people the chance to remain with their foster carers post 18 (called *Staying Put*) gives them the opportunity to reach their potential without the worries of managing their own tenancy and worrying about finances, alongside having the support of their foster family. Many of the young people who remain in their placement post 18 take the journey to University, knowing that they have their family to come home to during holidays and breaks.

Staying Put numbers have increased since the Ofsted inspection (2016) – this increase was accompanied by a change in delivery of this service with two dedicated social workers overseeing the support, advice and training of Staying Put and Supported Lodgings carers (with a focus on the young person's needs and what is needed to ensure the carer has the knowledge, skill and support required).

We currently have **35** young people staying put in their foster homes:

- These are a mixture of placements some being IFA, Kinship and In-house carers (foster carers and supported lodgings providers)
- 80% of young people remain in their supported lodgings placements until they reach 21, with some then remaining under a private arrangement.

The Leicestershire Virtual School is an *accredited ASDAN* centre and delivered training to 25 carers and Personal Advisors on how to support young people completing the course. This instruction will promote understanding and confidence in delivering advice and support and ensure a consistent approach across the authority.

Social workers agree with carers at each review which 1 or 2 units from the award will be covered over the following 6 months. These units are then worked through by young people and carers with PA support to complete the “paperwork” from the ASDAN book and to keep the evidence in an organised way e.g. in folders or scrapbooks.

At the end of 18 months the young person will have completed between 3 and 6 modules and the PA will complete the final paperwork with them (the summary of achievement pages); the full folder / scrapbook and completed ASDAN book will then be returned to the Virtual School for accreditation, allowing time for any amendments or additions to be made to the folders within the ASDAN timescale of 2 years from start to completion. It is expected that all post-16 young people will be supported to access this additional qualification.

All PAs have also attended the RiP training and themes are consistently on Team Meeting agenda to promote understanding of need. For example, a theme that is being repeatedly visited to ensure improved practice is the importance of identity.

Welfare Advice reintroduced to the service. We have a part-time welfare rights advisor. He is able to work directly with our young people and help when they have arrears issues or are not able to claim the benefits they need while at college or unable to work.

Ambitious, skilled and well supported foster carers are essential if our children in care and Care Leavers are to fulfil their educational potential and access a rewarding adulthood. The Virtual School delivers *education awareness training to carers and social workers, as well as attachment and trauma-informed strategies* for them to use. The Virtual School offer extends to attendance at foster carer network meetings and the new Virtual School website keeps carers informed of aspirational participation events to engage their children.

b. Voice

Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) is an active and engaged group of Care Leavers who meet regularly with the support of key staff / officers to have fun together but also ensure that issues important to them are addressed. They represent the wider Care Leavers group at key events e.g. Corporate Parenting Board.

Leicestershire County Council work with young people in care and Care Leavers to hear their voice to influence the service provision and the way forward. The workers through SYPAC ask young people for their views about what's going well, what are you worried about and what needs to happen to make you feel better. In January 2019 young people were asked the above and the following views were shared:

What's working well?

- *"PA helps with stress e.g. support around bills"*
- *"I'm socialising a lot, especially spending Christmas with family and SYPAC"*
- *"I have a nice flat in a good area – makes me feel motivated to do well"*
- *"Careers advice service help me so I can find a job for the future"*
- *"The extension period post 18 for semi-independence is good"*

What are we worried about?

- *"Gap / slow progress accessing mental health support"*
- *"Having enough money for bills which can be stressful"*
- *"Worried I'm alone now I'm 21. Scary not having that support"*

- *“Breakdown in relationships if it happens (family, friends, girlfriend / boyfriend) – that worry is always there”*
- *“Don’t make young people do things they don’t want to e.g. you should see family on your terms”*

What needs to happen?

- *“Have a PA again now I’m 21”*
- *“Help develop more confidence in self and people around us”*
- *“Making sure you get young person’s views about family and if you feel safe seeing them”*
- *“PAs need to make council (housing) aware of the young person’s needs. Not everything fits everyone.”*
- *“Making sure that my accommodation is suitable and I don’t need to go into shared accommodation”*
- *“I would like to see her twice a month. Either face to face or over the phone”*

These views are then incorporated into the service delivery plans and taken into account when planning services.

The Corporate Parenting Board is attended by key representatives of Children in Care and Care Leavers who meet with key partners to work on / address important issues. The Board is co-chaired by the Lead Member and a young person, and young people help to plan and contribute to the agenda to ensure issues of importance to them are addressed.

There is consistent Care Leaver representation on Corporate Parenting Board and over the last, 2 new CL members have attended (one each). PAs continue to have discussions with Care Leavers, encouraging them to attend.

Themes have been introduced to the Board and in January 2020 there was on Care Leaver Accommodation.

The engagement of the *Corporate Policies Team* is considered a great success. This has given Care Leavers a voice and influence of the Leicester & Leicestershire

Enterprise Partnership strategies. The following information has been contributed to set the scene for future meetings and engagement with businesses.

What are skills issues are impacting negatively on economic growth and productivity within Leicester and Leicestershire?

- Care Leavers are less likely to have accessed appropriate, individualised care advice
- Many Care Leavers are not 'job ready'
- Care Leavers often lack interview skills
- Lower numbers of Care Leavers access HE (Care Leavers are 11% less likely than to enter higher education than those from a similar demographic and with similar grades)
- Care Leavers access HE later than other young people (On average 8 months later due to weaker KS4 attainment)
- Care Leavers are statically much less likely to be EET (Due to other disruptions in their life, Care Leavers are 38% more likely to leave their course and not return. The most common reasons for considering leaving were academic issues, emotional and mental health issues and financial problems)
- Care Leavers often have lots of other stresses going on in their lives which make it harder to cope with employment, without understanding and supportive employers
- Care Leavers often have placement and moves of home over and under 18 which means they often need to change jobs
- Statistically Care Leavers begin post year 11 education at a later date, and employers often struggle to understand why this is.

What can be done to ensure that all Leicester and Leicestershire residents benefit from future economic growth?

- Additional employment support for Care Leavers
- Additional support in accessing traineeships / apprenticeships / HE
- Commitment from business to support Care Leavers – e.g. Care Leavers Covenant <https://mycovenant.org.uk/>

- Wider stakeholder engagement with issue – DWP, LLEP, schools, careers services...

c. Keeping Care Leavers safe

The Care Leavers team hold a two monthly care leaver multiagency risk management panels chaired by the Service Manager for Children in Care and Care Leavers. This is attended by key agencies and we are able to discuss particularly vulnerable or hard to reach Care Leavers and agree better, more joined up ways of helping them to achieve their potential. Successes include the sharing of information and intelligence that has enabled the service to reach out to Care Leavers, to offer support and build trusting relationships.

d. Emotional wellbeing and Health Pathways

In 2018 the Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland Strategic Health meeting for CIC was extended to include issues pertaining to Care Leavers. This saw Care Leavers attend the LLLR health event in November 2018 and in May 2019 with staff and partners to contribute to a mapping of services and needs.

The Promise has been reviewed and revised with key partners. Health partners finalised key activity and actions for 2019 to improve the health outcomes of children in care and Care Leavers. These activities and outcomes are monitored through the Strategic Board, for example, completion rates for health care plans and quality of those plans and the extension of the Health for Teens Website <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/> to include specific information for care leavers.

In 2018 the Council's *therapeutic offer* was extended to Care Leavers who have emotional support needs that cannot be met within the community and do not require the services of CAMHS. The Service Manager for Children in Care (including Care Leavers) receives requests for the allocation of a therapeutic budget which can then be spent with the care leaver and carer (if appropriate) to commission an appropriate service.

In 2018 MISTLE (Multi-disciplinary Intervention Support Team Leicestershire) was commissioned from Family Action. MISTLE works in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and the LPT NHS Trust and provides long term, therapeutic support to looked after children and young people, their families and carers - particularly those who present as follows:

- ✓ Who have experienced multiple placement breakdowns
- ✓ Who have received a mental health intervention (Tier 2)
- ✓ Who is a risk to themselves or to others
- ✓ Who are at risk of or excluded from school.

Many of our Care Leavers are busy adults who have their own lives. So, to stay in contact we also use *WhatsApp* when necessary to make sure we can contact each other when needed. Staff have co-written a policy that ensure WhatsApp is used to communicate general messages of encouragement and to advertise events. Personal or sensitive communications received from Care Leavers are responded to immediately and in a way that protects their confidentiality.

On 23rd October 2019, DfE announced programmes totaling £19 million to improve support for care leavers. £3 million was promised *“to extend the Pupil Premium Plus to all 16-18-year-old care leavers, supporting their transition into further education. This is to help them be ambitious in their choice of qualifications and to make sure that there is a greater chance that they will complete their chosen course.”* It has yet to be determined how this funding will be distributed, or how it should be used.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vital-new-support-for-young-people-leaving-care>

7.4 Care Leavers - Performance for 2019/20

a. Apprenticeships

In May 2018 the People Strategy Board agreed to ring-fence LCC apprenticeships for Leicestershire Care Leavers. By May 2019:

- 1 work trial has led to an offer of full-time permanent employment
- 3 work trials have led to apprenticeships
- 1 work trial was successfully completed but the care leaver turned down the offered apprenticeship.

By October 2019:

- 7 apprenticeships
- 2 resignations

By December 2019:

- 9 apprenticeships

By March 2020:

- Apprenticeships will get the national working wage
- The ring-fenced LCC apprenticeships scheme for care leavers continues, however recruitment has been frozen, and the scheme will be re-launched when restrictions ease and learning providers have clarified their offer for the new academic year.

b. Young People in Higher Education

- 8 young people started at University
- 1 young person has started a Masters Degree
- 1 young person has started a Level 5 course at college (foundation degree)
- 7 young people are in their 2nd or 3rd year at University

c. Young People in Education, Employment and Training

The Virtual School and Care Leavers Team Manager have worked with *Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)*. The LLEP is a strategic body led by a Board made up of local government and business leaders as well as senior education and third sector representatives. The LLEP's remit is to drive forward regeneration and growth of the local economy. The ambition is to secure LLEP's commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant and seek to raise aspirations and outcomes for care leavers by offering ring-fenced apprenticeships, work experience, mentoring and sponsorship.

Participation events are run by the Virtual School, which include group taster sessions for children in care provided by local universities' *Widening Participation* Teams and bespoke visits for individual children and young people to university and college faculties when interest in particular areas have been expressed.

Careers advice has entered into local authority control, with information, advice and guidance support integrated into the Care Leavers Service, delivering to the most vulnerable Care Leavers, ensuring staff have the right information and understanding to be ambitious and determined corporate parents.

172 (64.2%) of 268 Care Leavers who had not returned home for more than six months were in education, employment or training when contacted around their birthday

d. Young people in Suitable Accommodation in 2019/20

94.8% Care Leavers in suitable accommodation.

e. Young people in contact in 2019/20

278 Care Leavers were eligible for inclusion in the 2019/2020 return, of whom the local authority was in touch with 267 (96%).

8. ADVOCACY AND COMPLAINTS

The services you receive from Children's Social Care in Leicestershire is personal to each service user, children and family. We encourage service users, included children in Leicestershire's care, to tell us if we are doing things well or not. This enables each department to act to improve services.

Children or Young People making complaints about social care are given information about advocacy support and assistance in obtaining an advocate if requested. The role of the advocate in the complaint's procedure is to provide independent and confidential information, advice, representation and support.

The complaints procedure is divided into 3 stages. The overview of these stages is attached as appendix 1.

There were 5 complaints made by a Looked after Child, either in own right or via support from Childrens Rights. Three of these complaints were made through an advocate and two made by young people directly. The themes of the complaints vary. A summary is provided:

- Age assessment delay
- Management of staff at a supported living provision
- Delay in identifying a foster placement
- Lack of support from the Children in Care Team
- Concern about suitability of accommodation and support

None of the complaints progressed beyond stage one. A summary of findings and resolution is provided:

- No finding, matter resolved through discussion with the young person
- No fault found, learning identified for the provider to improve service
- Fault found, accepted there had been delays, apology offered and action identified to progress.
- Fault found, child spoken to, he was happy that issues had been resolved and now felt supported.

- No fault found, accommodation assessed to be suitable.

Appendix 1 – Complaints stages

The complaints procedure is divided into three stages

Stage 1 Local Resolution

Wherever possible a manager will send you a response within 10 working days.
Sometimes a complaint may take longer and be extended to 20 working days

If not resolved – or if there is agreement for investigation

Stage 2 Investigation

The Customer Relations team may arrange an impartial investigation. We will aim to let you have this reply with the outcome of the investigation within 25 working days.
Sometimes investigations may take longer than this. If this happens you will be informed and advised of the outcome within 65 working days

If not resolved

Stage 3 Panel

The Stage 3 panel consists of three independent people and will usually meet within 30 working days of the Customer Relations Team accepting your request. After the meeting the panel members will make recommendations to the Director of Children's and Families within 5 working days on whether or not something else needs to be done about your complaint. The Director will write to let you know the final decision within 15 working days

If you are still unhappy with the response you can ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to look at the issue again. The Ombudsman can be contacted at The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
Tel 0300 061 0614; website: www.lgo.org.uk

Appendix 2 - Detailed description of the Residential Strategy

1. Development of a “Hub”, which will accommodate the Assessment and Resource Team (ART).

This will deliver a peripatetic support service comprising a range of social work, medical and psychological professionals known as the **ART** team. This team will undertake child and young person assessment of need and identify appropriate resources required to ensure “right placement first time”. The team will also provide wraparound services to support local residential provision, to share risk as appropriate.

The **ART** team will ensure, strong staff to child ratios, and the skills to provide the following types of placement according to the presenting needs of the child:

- Crisis Intervention
- Comprehensive Assessment and Care Planning
- Transitional Support Packages
- Family Work to Facilitate a Return Home

2. Development of Assessment Beds (AB’S) attached to the Hub

The ART and Hub will work to contain the anxiety and distress that children exhibit at the point of family or placement breakdown. They will help the child to feel safe, emotionally contained through clear, consistent boundaries and predictable nurturing routines. The **Hub** will accommodate 3 specialist beds for assessment of need, delivered by the **ART**.

- With emotional and behavioural difficulties
- With complex health and social care needs
- Who are young parents
- Who have unregulated behaviour
- With high needs related to a delayed transfer of care
- Who are particularly at risk from going missing

3. Development of Multi-Functional Properties (MFPs) to accommodate the flexibility required to meet changing need and demand.

These properties will be unregulated but will be staffed by appropriately qualified professionals to meet the individual needs of the residents. The provision will work to a recognised kite mark of quality to give assurances for an unregulated service.

The development of MFPs is an innovative approach to providing ‘flexible provision’ which is needs-led. Consideration can be given to either the MFP or Assessment Bed unit being located at Welland House, with adaptations.

This provision can accommodate up to three young people who will be aged 16-18years on admission and of either gender. The three units will be fully self-contained, multi-functional and double occupancy, so that these units can be used

flexibly— it would be equally possible to use as a Parent & Child setting, or to support a child with learning difficulties.

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership, including the draft Annual Report 2019/20 for the partnership and the Business Plan for 2020/21.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties for local authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area; section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
3. These duties can only realistically be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
4. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 (statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) give responsibility for this join-up locally with the safeguarding partners, the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the local authority, which have a shared and equal duty to agree and make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
5. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements locally are managed through a new partnership – the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The arrangements were published on 28 June 2019 and commenced on 29 September 2019. These arrangements replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

6. It is a statutory requirement, as set out in Working Together 2018, that the Safeguarding Partners publish a report at least once every twelve months on the arrangements and their effectiveness.

Background

7. The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for Leicestershire and Rutland were presented to this Committee on 5 March 2019, prior to being published on 28 June 2019.
8. The Safeguarding Children Partnership shares some operational arrangements with the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) and some partnership structures with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb).

Progress

9. Since commencing in September 2019, the main Partnership met in October and December 2019 and July 2020. A meeting scheduled for March 2020 was cancelled at short notice as it fell during the early weeks of lockdown, as responses were still being developed. The Partnership subgroups have continued to drive the work of the Partnership during this period.
10. The first months of the Partnership have been a transitional period, during which it has further developed and adapted the detail of its ways of working. Areas of further development in this period include:
 - Quality Assurance and Performance Framework
 - Engagement approach with schools
 - Engagement approach with Children and Young people
 - Child Safeguarding Practice Review policy and process aligned with the Leicester SCPB.
11. The Partnership carried out a multi-agency assurance process regarding mental health and safeguarding children and oversaw continued work on Case Reviews commenced by the former Safeguarding Children Board.
12. Learning from these processes is being put into action to improve multi-agency safeguarding practice and outcomes for children. The learning has been shared through the Partnership's Safeguarding Matters newsletter and concise learning briefings which also encourage practitioners to reflect on their practice.
13. Learning from reviews has also featured as part of the Partnership's multi-agency safeguarding training programme delivered by partners. Forty-four courses were delivered to around 1,200 participants across agencies. This included two large-scale conference events focussed on the voice of children and learning from reviews.
14. The Partnership has worked with young people to produce a video highlighting the importance of the voice and lived experience of children called 'Was not heard' and has developed the '#ourdoorisopen' campaign in response to Covid-19 lockdown to encourage the public to be aware of and report safeguarding concerns.

15. This work of the partners and the outcomes of review and assurance work are included in the Annual Report of the Partnership, attached as Appendix A to this report.

Changes to the arrangements

16. As the Partnership has operated it has kept its working under review to support good governance and what works. This has led to a number of changes to the arrangements that were published in June 2019. These are as follows:
- An Assurance and Audit subgroup established to take forward assurance work.
 - Membership of the main Safeguarding Children Partnership meeting has been broadened to all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies
 - Membership of the Planning and Delivery Group has been focussed down on the Safeguarding Partners.
 - In order to maintain independence, the Independent Advisor only advises on decision making regarding Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews rather than making the decision regarding whether such a review is to be carried out.
17. In addition, the Partnership has developed its Quality Assurance Framework and has established approaches for engagement with schools in conversation with head teachers across the range of school sectors. The arrangements document has also been updated in light of these.

Forward Plans

18. The Partnership has drawn up its priority statements and a Business Plan for 2019/20; this is a single plan shared with Leicester SCPB and has been informed by the SCPs Young People's Advisory Group who met in February 2020 to consider and identify their priorities for safeguarding children.
19. The Business Plan is attached as Appendix B to this report and includes the following priority outcomes:

1) Statutory responsibilities

- The Partnership has carried out the statutory requirements of the Safeguarding Partners and assured itself they are meeting these.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Partnership assurance work result in timely learning and changes in systems and practice to improve safeguarding/outcomes for children.
- There is evidence that the work of the Partnership has improved safeguarding and welfare of children and young people
- The impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood, emerging issues are identified, and partnership approaches to address this and mitigate future risk are in place.

2) Voice of the Child

- The priorities and work of the partnership has been influenced by the voice and experience of children who have received safeguarding support.

- Partners evidence that work with children to safeguard them is directed by their voice and lived experience and this is having a positive impact on their safety and wellbeing.
- The partnership is assured that messages and measures online safety are reaching children and young people and supporting them to be safe online.

3) Mental Health

- The emotional and mental health needs of children with learning disabilities and/or autism are understood in the context of safeguarding and support for this group of children is in place as required to reduce risk.
- Safeguarding and mental health support for children is joined up and partners work together and with young people to reduce risk of harm.

4) Communications

- People who work or live in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland report child abuse and neglect and concerns they are aware of.

5) Domestic Abuse

- The Partnership is assured that there are appropriate support and interventions for children living with domestic abuse.

Independent Advisor

20. The former Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board, Simon Westwood, has supported the Partnership through its transition as Independent Advisor. A single Independent Advisor has now been appointed across Leicestershire and Rutland SCP and the Leicester SCPB to facilitate the Partnerships and lead the independent scrutiny of the arrangements. Kay Whyte-Bell will commence in this role at the end of September 2020.

Proposals/Options

21. The Committee is asked to consider the progress report, including the draft Annual Report and Business Plan, and to make any comments or proposed additions or amendments to the report that will be addressed prior to the final version of the Annual Report being published.

Consultation

22. The Annual Report includes a summary of the consultation and engagement work the LSCB has carried out with children and young people and with practitioners.
23. The Business Plan has been directly influenced by the priorities identified by children and young people as part of the Leicestershire and Rutland SCP Young People's Advisory Group.
24. All members of the SCP have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on earlier drafts of the Annual Report and have been consulted in developing the Business Plan.

Resource Implications

25. Safeguarding partners have, along with Safeguarding Adults Board statutory partners, set a single agreement of principles to share the operating costs of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicestershire and Rutland.
26. As part of this agreement Leicestershire County Council contributes £112,633 to the SAB and SCP in 2020/21. This is 16% of the total funding for the SABs and SCPs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and 31% of the operating budget for Leicestershire and Rutland. The budget agreed by the County Council for the SCP and SAB in February 2020 was £137,897. The difference will be held in reserve to support any extraordinary demands upon the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board.
27. This compares with £137,866 in the previous year which was 40% of the total budget for the Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB, SCP and SAB of £343,419 in 2019/20.
28. Leicestershire County Council also hosts the Safeguarding Boards' Business Office that supports the SCP and SAB.
29. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

30. The Annual Report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be published by the end of September 2020. Any comments will be considered by the addressed prior to the final report being published.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5 March 2019.
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s144650/New%20Safeguarding%20Arrangements.pdf>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

31. None.

Officer to Contact

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership 2019/20.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

32. Safeguarding children, young people and adults, concerns individuals who are likely to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. Information on differing needs of and impacts on different groups of individuals with regard to safeguarding is considered as part of the process to develop the Board's Business Plan. Specific impacts on or views of different groups is also considered in the work of the SCPs Planning and Delivery and Assurance and Audit Groups in assessing performance and effectiveness with regard to safeguarding.

Crime and Disorder Implications

33. There is a close connection between the work of the LRSCP and that of community safety partnerships in Leicestershire. For example, the LRSCP works closely with community safety partnerships to scrutinise and challenge performance in community safety issues that affect the safeguarding and well-being of individuals and groups, for example domestic abuse and Prevent. The LRSCP also supports community safety partnerships in carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews and acting on their recommendations.

Environmental Implications

34. The published LRSCP Annual Report will be made available on-line in electronic form, rather than paper. There are no other environmental implications.

Partnership Working and associated issues

35. Safeguarding is dependent on the effective work of the partnership as set out in national regulation, Working Together 2018, published by the Department for Education.

Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2019-20

Foreword

We are pleased to present this first report of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership that covers the period from 29 September 2019 to the 31 March 2020.

The transition from Local Safeguarding Children Board arrangements has provided the opportunity to review and strengthen how we work together to safeguard children and look to make better use of the resources we have across the partnership.

Whilst this first period has been a period of transition we have been able to review the approach to safeguarding and mental health, improve processes across safeguarding children and contribute to changes in practice through training and sharing learning from our review and assurance work across the Partnership.

Hearing and responding to the voice of children has been at the heart of all of this, and our powerful film 'Was not heard' produced with and by children and young people locally and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership will support young people and children, and their experiences, needs and welfare to be at the centre of the work of

We want to thank all the dedicated workers and managers in organisations across Leicestershire & Rutland that are working to support the welfare and safety of children.

The Safeguarding Partners for Leicestershire & Rutland

The Partnership

The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership brings together organisations across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland with the vision "for children and young people in Leicester to be safe, well and achieve their full potential".

The Partnership commenced in September 2019 as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements required by Working Together.

Its members include the statutory safeguarding partners: Police, Local Authorities, and Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as other relevant agencies, including schools, health agencies, Probation and other organisations working with children.

The Partnership is Chaired by its Independent Advisor, Simon Westwood who leads the Independent Scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements. This is the statutory report of the SCP outlining the work it has carried out to the end of March 2020.

In Line with Working Together 2018 government guidance this report outlines:

- What has been done by the Partnership and the partners, to safeguard children and young people during the previous year and how effective the partnership arrangements have been.
- This report includes information about:
 - Agreed priorities
 - Analysis of progress against priorities
 - Decisions and actions taken by partners
 - Feedback from children and young people and how this has been utilised to inform work and influence service provision
 - Information on the delivery and impact of multi-agency safeguarding training
 - Information on the learning and impact of any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
 - Any changes to the safeguarding arrangements and reasons for those changes

For more information on how the Partnership works please visit <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp>

The work of the Partnership

The Priorities of the Partnership

In September 2019 The SCP adopted the priorities of the former Safeguarding Children Board, which were as follows:

- **Partnership Transition:** Influence the development of new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to ensure effective engagement.
- **Multiple Risk Factors:** Improve the understanding of the impact of multiple risk factors on children and the response to this.
- **Safeguarding Children – Access to Services:** Ensure the pathways for access to services for safeguarding children are robust and effective
- **Child Exploitation - (Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, Missing and Gangs):** Be assured that children at risk of exploitation are effectively safeguarded
- **Safeguarding Children with Disabilities:** Improve the approach to safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Partnership Transition

The multi-agency safeguarding arrangements document was published in June 2019 and the Partnership commenced in September 2019.

A shared quality assurance framework was developed and adopted across the Leicestershire & Rutland SCP and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

The role and approach to engage schools in the work of the partnership was developed through a conversation with schools. This conversation with schools resulted in additional representation from schools on the partnership and set an engagement and assurance approach with schools based upon existing groups that bring together headteachers and safeguarding leads in Leicestershire and in Rutland.

Further work is required to develop the relationship between the partnership and independent schools, which was delayed by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As part of developing engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector the SCP set up a VCS page on its website and the VCS reference group of the partnership produced and disseminated three briefings to communicate key information across the sector. These focussed on key information relevant to the sector including the updates to the Thresholds guidance and specific learning from reviews across the region regarding safeguarding policies and pre-birth risk assessments for unborn children.

Multiple Risk Factors, Access to Services and Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

The LSCB work on Multiple Risk factors and Children with Disabilities in previous years was incorporated into the new Thresholds for access to services set up as part of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

These were launched alongside an updated referral document with a programme of training over six months supporting workers across agencies to make effective referrals.

At the start of 2020 practitioners across agencies were surveyed to evaluate the use of the updated LLR Multiagency Referral Form and Threshold document. Feedback was received from 167 practitioners. Whilst this indicated these documents are simpler to understand and use, there is further work to continue to improve these, and this will be considered in future updates. The partnership planned to assess the impact of the new thresholds guidance in 2020, however this will be further considered in light of the global pandemic.

QUOTE

Child Exploitation

Development work regarding Child Exploitation including Child Criminal Exploitation was led by the Child Exploitation Operations Group and Vulnerability Executive. The Partnership received assurance reports regarding this work and links with children who go missing.

Seeking Assurance

The partnership has developed and implemented a Quality Assurance Framework shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. This can be found [here \(link\)](#).

The partnership reviewed the data required to assess the performance and impact of multi-agency safeguarding. Going forward the partnerships will be reviewing key multi-agency safeguarding data from Safeguarding partners including in the short to medium term specific data being reported to the DfE as part of the response to Covid-19.

The SCP carried out its first multi-agency assurance process focussed on Mental Health and Safeguarding children in January 2020. The process reviewed a range of information and reports including multi-agency and single agency audits, learning from reviews, information from commissioners of services, and the findings of work by young people in the area.

The assurance process identified 'Better engagement from and with CAMHS in safeguarding and Child in Need processes' as the main area to take forward to support effective safeguarding of children.

The assurance process identified other areas to take forward as follows:

- CAMHS and other services supporting child mental health need to know and understand safeguarding crossover
- Improved recognition of and response to teenage Neglect, particularly emotional neglect.
- Mental health should promote more robust multi-agency working. This requires that people understand their and each other's roles.
- Quality of discharge planning from mental health settings into schools is not clear
- There are still gaps in hearing and responding to voice and lived experience of children
- Ensure practitioners recognise that parental mental health plays an important part in children's lived experience and respond appropriately
- It is uncertain how agencies are working at key multi-agency safeguarding contact points.
- Understand and responding to Behavioural/emotional difficulties vs mental health issues

“You go back to school and they don't understand what you have been through or how to support you” (YPAG)

“It is really obvious that you are getting support, you are pulled out of lessons or it is marked on the register” (YPAG)

The partnership has set up a task and finish group that is working on approaches to improve multi-agency working and understanding across mental health and safeguarding provision. The partnership's performance framework will include information about multi-agency safeguarding contact points. Training is being commissioned regarding teenage neglect and further work to look at how schools link with mental health services is planned.

These areas will continue to be followed up in the partnerships assurance work going forward.

The Partnership received a report from Councils and Leisure Centre operators giving assurance about the action being taken in response to recommendations from the LSCBs review of safeguarding in Leisure Centres that took place in 2018.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures

In addition to the update of the Thresholds guidance and referral form and the survey on the implementation of these the partnership has ensured procedures are in place for multi-agency safeguarding in line with Working Together 2018.

Training

The SCPs training co-ordination and delivery function is shared with the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to support consistent and effective partnership working. In total 44 courses were delivered across the two areas as part of the partnership's training plan with around 1,200 participants from across partner agencies.

Training included the 'Core Awareness in Safeguarding Children and Young People' and 'Multi Agency Working Together' courses and 'Working Together to Achieve an Effective Referral' focussed on the updated thresholds guidance and Multi-Agency Referral Form. Specific multiagency training was carried out regarding safeguarding and the following areas of priority: The Voice of the Child; Disabled Children; Neglect; Children's Mental Health. The SCP also supported co-ordination of relevant multi-agency training from Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse providers and the Violence Reduction Network.

The SCP ran two large-scale conference-style training events. The first called 'The Voice' focussed on the importance of hearing what children say and acting on their words and incorporated the SCPs newly produced 'Was not heard' video. The second was a joint conference with the Safeguarding Adults Boards across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland covering learning areas across adult and child safeguarding including criminal exploitation, mental capacity and preventing violent extremism.

The SCP also facilitates a local trainer's network which supports development of local safeguarding trainers through development sessions and networking. Learning from reviews and assurance and changes to procedures are communicated through this group.

In addition Leicestershire & Rutland County Councils ran training and development sessions for Safeguarding leads in schools and early years establishments in the area.

Response to Covid-19

At the end of March 2020 the partnership had to react quickly to the emerging global pandemic and response to this. Within four days of lockdown, the four safeguarding partners had reviewed their arrangements and written out to the partnership identifying which SCP work would be prioritised in the changing circumstances.

The LRSCP and Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board also agreed a joint statement in relation to Covid-19 to encourage people to continue to report concerns regarding safeguarding.

The Partnership saw a significant reduction in the number of contacts coming into children's social care at the end of March and beginning of April and was concerned that children at risk of abuse would be seen by fewer professionals. In response to this, led by Rutland County Council, the SCP developed a safeguarding campaign to encourage everyone to look out for the safety of children in their community during lockdown. This was promoted across the partnerships, through social media and in local communities and was recognised as good practice by the Local Government Association in May 2020.

The safeguarding partners set up a 'sub-cell' of the Local Resilience forum to oversee safeguarding operational responses and identify and respond to safeguarding risks arising as a result of changes in service provision.

The impact of Covid-19 and the response of partners and the partnership was regularly reviewed to support effective safeguarding and use of partners resources.

Child Safeguarding Practice reviews and Serious Case Reviews

The partnership assesses Serious Safeguarding Incidents as defined by Working Together 2018 and decides whether a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) to identify how to improve safeguarding responses in future is required. These replace Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) carried out by Safeguarding Children Boards.

The former Safeguarding Children Board published one Serious Case Review in 2019 and work continued on four further Serious Case Reviews. These are all scheduled to be completed and published by the end of September 2020 in line with Working Together Transition guidance.

The Partnership did not commence any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in the period of this report.

The Partnership completed six other learning reviews that had not met the criteria for an SCR or CSPR.

These reviews identified the following key areas for further work:

- Identifying and responding to adolescent neglect
- Hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children and evidencing this
- Addressing multi-agency communication, professional differences and transfers of cases between areas in the best interests of a child or young person
- Effective engagement and involvement of all agencies in child protection conferences
- Understand and responding to behavioural or emotional difficulties as opposed to mental health issues
- Collaborative working regarding safeguarding and child mental health support

Action plans are in place to respond to these and learning has been shared with practitioners across organisations through the Safeguarding Partnerships' Safeguarding Matters newsletter

Action already taken during the year includes:

- Standards and guidance produced to support effective child protection conferences
- Ran 'The Voice' conference and produced 'Was not heard' film spotlighting hearing and responding to the voice of children, to be utilised by agencies with practitioners commencing in 2020.
- Planning training on adolescent neglect (initially postponed due to Covid-19)
- Work underway on the multiagency response to safeguarding children with mental ill-health.

"When I cry I'm talking to you, when I fall silent I'm talking to you..." (Was Not Heard)

Practitioner feedback on the 'Was not heard' film has been excellent, This will be a core element of training and briefing work to enhance how the voice of children is heard across the partnership.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published one national review during this report's period: 'It was hard to escape: Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation' was published on 4 March 2020.

Applying the learning locally will be considered by the partnership's Planning and Delivery group and the local partnership groups that oversee work on criminal exploitation. An article on the learning from this review will be included in the Partnership's Safeguarding Matters newsletter.

How feedback from children and families has informed our work and influenced service provision.

"It's my life you're talking about. I might not understand everything yet but I'm living it." (Was Not Heard)

The Partnership has a Young Peoples Advisory Group, which includes young people from across Leicestershire and Rutland with a variety of backgrounds relating to safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership adopted the action plan developed by the Advisory Group with the Safeguarding Children Board to develop responses to Mental Health and Safeguarding and produced a 'you said we did' sheet to communicate with young people the questions the Group had asked and how the partnership had responded.

"I feel like I was listened to" (YPAG)

In February 2020 the Young People's Advisory Group considered current work of the Partnership, their experiences and the views of their peers and identified the following areas of priority for the Partnership:

- Mental health
- Online safety

"Worries about being bullied online can affect your mental health and then you turn to the internet for help which can put you in a vulnerable situation to more bullying or the wrong information because of fake news"

These priorities were fed into the postponed SCP priority planning day in May 2020 and will be incorporated into the SCP Business plan for 2020-21.

The Advisory Group is carrying out a local survey of the impact of Covid-19 on young people's emotional health and wellbeing. The group will consider the findings of this alongside the partnership to identify further work required to respond.

Changes to the arrangements

The partnership is committed to developing and improving. The following changes to the arrangements have been made since the commencement of the partnership in September 2019:

- Completion of the Quality Assurance Framework
- Assurance and Audit subgroup established to take forward assurance and audit work.
- Membership of the main SCP partnership meeting broadened to all safeguarding partners and relevant agencies
- Membership of the Planning and Delivery Group focussed down on the Safeguarding partners.
- The Independent Advisor only advises on CSPR decision making rather than making the decision regarding whether a CSPR is to be carried out to maintain independence.
- Engagement arrangements with schools established through existing forums.

These changes have been made as the partnership has reviewed the roles of its group and what supports good governance as it has been working during this period. The changes will be included in an updated arrangements document published in August 2020. The arrangements will be formally reviewed in conjunction with the arrangements for Leicester by March 2021 following a year of operation.

Independent Scrutiny

Report of Independent Advisor...

Finance

The work of the SCP is supported by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnership Business Office that also supports the Safeguarding Adults Boards and carries out Domestic Homicide Reviews for Community Safety Partnerships in Leicestershire & Rutland. The SCP is funded by contributions from its partners. In 2019/20 contributions covered the former LSCB for the period up to 29 September 2019 and the SCP from 29 September 2019 to 31 March 2020. The contributions and overview of expenditure of the LSCB and SCP for the whole period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 are set out below:

Income

	£
Leicestershire County Council	84,307
Rutland County Council	53,034
Leicestershire Police	44,599
West Leicestershire CCG	30,494
East Leicestershire & Rutland CCG	26,103
National Probation Service	1,348
Reducing Re-offending Partnerships	2,000
Cafcass	550
Total Income (SCP and LSCB)	242,435

Expenditure

	£
Staffing	129,681
Independent Chairing	15,600
Support Services	9,000
Operating Costs	8,849
Training	33,673
YPAG	1,798
Case Reviews	19,451
Total Expenditure (SCP and LSCB)	218,052

Expenditure was lower than budgeted due to vacancies in the support office, and delays in Case Reviews. The balance will go into reserves to cover cost of case reviews going forwards.

A single funding arrangement has been agreed between the Safeguarding Partners for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland and the statutory partners for the Safeguarding Adults Boards for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland for funding the Safeguarding Boards and Safeguarding Children Partnerships for 2020 onwards.

Forward priorities

We are working under the expectation that the impact of and responses to Covid-19 will continue over the next year and therefore all of the work of the SCP will take place in that context. Many areas of our work will change to adapt to this context. There will also be some areas of business that need a specific focus related to Covid19 and our response to it.

As this is a changing situation the partnerships plans will be regularly reviewed to respond to this.

In this context the Partnership has identified the following forward priorities and outcome statements shared with Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board:

Statutory responsibilities

- The Partnership has carried out the statutory requirements of the Safeguarding Partners and assured itself they are meeting these.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Partnership assurance work result in timely learning and changes in systems and practice to improve safeguarding/outcomes for children.
- The impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood, emerging issues are identified, and partnership approaches to address this and mitigate future risk are in place.

Voice of the Child

- The priorities and work of the partnership has been influenced by the voice and experience of children who have received safeguarding support.
- Partners evidence that work with children to safeguard them is directed by their voice and lived experience and this is having a positive impact on their safety and wellbeing.
- The partnership is assured that messages and measures online safety are reaching children and young people and supporting them to be safe online.

Mental Health

- The emotional and mental health needs of children with learning disabilities and/or autism are understood in the context of safeguarding and support for this group of children is in place as required to reduce risk.
- Safeguarding and mental health support for children is joined up and partners work together and with young people to reduce risk of harm.

Communications

- People who work or live in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland report child abuse and neglect and concerns they are aware of.

Domestic Abuse

- The partnership is assured that there are appropriate support and interventions for children living with domestic abuse.

“There needs to be more information for all young people on how to protect yourself against cyber-bullying” (YPAG)

“Health and wellbeing and positive mental health should be put on the school curriculum – because young people need to know how to understand it” (YPAG)

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LLR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS BUSINESS PLAN APRIL 2020 to MARCH 2021 (v1.2)

Covid-19 context statement

We are working under the expectation that the impact of and responses to Covid-19 will continue over the next year and therefore all of the work of the SCP will take place in that context. Many areas of our work will change to adapt to this context. There will also be some areas of business that need a specific focus related to Covid-19 and our response to it. As this is a changing situation this plan will be regularly reviewed to respond to this.

1. Meeting Statutory Responsibilities & Maintaining Business as Usual

Ensuring core duties under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) and statutory guidance Working Together 2018 are met as outlined by our published arrangements.

What will success look like?

- The Partnership has carried out the statutory requirements of the Safeguarding Partners and assured itself they are meeting these.
- Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Partnership assurance work result in timely learning and changes in systems and practice to improve safeguarding/outcomes for children.
- There is evidence that the work of the Partnership has improved safeguarding and welfare of children and young people
- The impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood, emerging issues are identified, and partnership approaches to address this and mitigate future risk are in place.

Key Deliverables	Lead /s	Activity	Timescale
1. Annual Report. The safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements,	LRSCP: Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office Manager LSCPb: Safeguarding Boards	LRSCP annual report to be written by LRSCP Manager, and signed off by LRSCP, prior to being published on www.lrsb.org.uk LSCPb annual report to be written by LSCPb	At least once in every 12-month period. Publish as soon after the end of the business year as is feasible and ideally no later than September of each year.

including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice (Working Together, 2018, p.79)	Manager LRSCP/LSCPb Independent Advisor	Manager, and signed off by LSCPb, prior to being published on www.lcitylscb.org LSCP/LSCPb Independent Advisor to provide independent scrutiny of these reports (Working Together, 2018, p.77)	
2. Undertake Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews. See Chapter 4, Working Together (2018).	LRSCP: Chair of LRSCP Case Review Group (Assistant Director - Children's Social Care & Early Help, Leicestershire County Council) LSCPb: Chair of LSCPb Case Review Group (Director - Children's Social Care & Early Help, Social Care and Education, Leicester City Council)	Each partnership will undertake Local Safeguarding Children Practice Reviews in line with Chapter 4 of Working Together, 2018 and as set out arrangements for conducting local reviews.	Ongoing throughout the reporting year.
3. Reviewing Published Arrangements. The three safeguarding partners should report any updates to the published arrangements in their yearly report and the proposed timescale for implementation. 'The three safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child	LRSCP The three safeguarding partners (Police, LA, CCG) with support from: LRSCP: Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office Manager LRSCP Independent Advisor	LRSCP: Review LRSCP arrangements, including voluntary sector engagement and agree timescale for implementation of any updates.	LRSCP: Initial conversations July 2020, for completion March 2021
	LSCPb The three safeguarding partners (Police, LA, CCG) with	LSCPb: LSCPb arrangements published June 2019, effective September 2019 in line with Working Together (2018). Any updates to be	LSCPb: Begin September 2020, for completion March 2021

<p>safeguarding incidents. To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies as well as arrangements for conducting local reviews' (Working Together, 2019, p.72-73).</p>	<p>support from:</p> <p>LSCPb: Safeguarding Boards Manager</p> <p>LSCPb Independent Advisor</p>	<p>considered in September 2020 (once the arrangements have been in use one year and had chance to embed, at that stage the new Independent Advisor is also likely to be in post).</p>	
<p>4. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Training. Implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents (Working Together, 2018, p.105).</p> <p>Multi-agency training will be important in supporting the collective understanding of local need... To enable this, the three safeguarding partners should consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission. (Working Together, 2018, p.12-13)</p>	<p>Chair of LLR Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (Chair: Trust Lead for Safeguarding, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out needs assessment • Set up a multi-agency safeguarding children training programme • Adapt programme throughout the year to take into account learning from reviews and audits • Evaluate the programme 	<p>Needs assessment complete by June/July 2020</p> <p>Work programme in place once business plan confirmed.</p> <p>Evaluation ready in time for end of year reporting (i.e. April 2021)</p>
<p>5. Maintaining multi-agency policies and procedures. In order to work together effectively, the safeguarding partners with other local organisations and agencies should develop processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries 	<p>Chair of LLR Multi-Agency Policies and Procedures Group (Chair: Head of Service, Safeguarding Improvement and Quality Assurance, Leics County Council)</p>	<p>Reviewing, developing and maintaining inter-agency safeguarding children policies and procedures via the LLR Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the reporting year.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families (Working Together, 2018, p.73) 			
6. Impact of COVID-19	<p>Groups to feed into LLR Performance and Delivery Group as follows:</p> <p>LLR Audit and Assurance Group: when undertaking audit and assurance work, ensure the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood and emerging issues are identified. Report this into the Planning and Delivery Group to ensure that partnership approaches are put in place to address this and mitigate future risk.</p> <p>City and County/Rutland Review groups: reviews undertaken are to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children is understood and that emerging issues are identified.</p> <p>LLR Safeguarding Sub Cell: feeds in the impact of Covid-19</p>	<p>Chair of Performance and Delivery Group (Chair: Dawn Godfrey, Deputy Director Children's Services Rutland County Council) to receive information from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLR Audit and Assurance Group • 2 x Review Groups • LLR Safeguarding Sub Cell <p>to identify the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and welfare of children update the LSCPB about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emerging issues, and • any partnership approaches to address these issues and mitigate future 	<p>Throughout the business year.</p>

	on safeguarding and welfare of children at an operational level, identifying emerging issues and partnership approaches taken to address these / mitigate future risk are in place.		
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2. Voice of the Child

Ensuring the voice and lived experience of children is given prominence in all safeguarding of children.

Outcome statements

- The priorities and work of the partnership has been influenced by the voice and experience of children who have received safeguarding support.
- Partners evidence that work with children to safeguard them is directed by their voice and lived experience and this is having a positive impact on their safety and wellbeing.
- The partnership is assured that messages and measures online safety are reaching children and young people and supporting them to be safe online

Key Deliverables	Lead	Activity	Timescale
1. Assurance reports that evidence the impact of agencies hearing and responding to the voice and lived experience of children (including the voice of children who have experienced the safeguarding process)	Chair of Performance and Delivery Group (Chair: Deputy Director Children's Services Rutland County Council)	Evidence provided as part of regular assurance reporting and focused assurance work, that agencies are seeking and responding to the voice and lived experience of children, and this is improving the lives of children.	October 2020 January 2021
2. Young People's safeguarding priorities to feed into partnership priority	L&R County participation officers and LR Business office	Meetings of YPAG with input from SCP members to identify young people's	In line with priority setting meetings each year i.e. June 2020

setting, ensuring the voice of young people who have been through safeguarding processes is heard.	LCity Participation officers and Safeguarding Partnership Office	priorities regarding safeguarding and areas for improvement. These are presented to SCP in priority review process. Young People's priorities from participation work in Leicester that are relevant to safeguarding are collated. These are presented to SCP in priority review process.	In line with priority setting meetings each year i.e. June 2020
3. LLR SCPs co-produce work with local young people	L&R participation officers and L&R Business office LRSCP Independent Advisor	YPAG take part in one independent scrutiny and assurance piece of work and co-produce recommendations and actions to be progressed by the SCP.	March 2021
	Local young people with the support of LCity participation officer/s	Local young people to co-lead on a piece of work with the LSCPB relating to safeguarding children priorities. This could be scrutiny and assurance work with L&R YPAG (see above) if felt to be appropriate.	March 2021
4. Recruitment of Independent Advisor informed by views of local young people	LLR Safeguarding Partners	Young people involved in panel to interview and recruit of LLR Independent Advisor	September 2020
5. Co-produced voice of the child materials to be promoted with a view to them being used in reflective practice across the partnerships	Chair of LLR Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (Chair: Trust Lead for Safeguarding, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust)	Promote the Was Not Heard video and other relevant material i.e. How Will You Hear Me? videos as part of the LLR training offer and resources	Was Not Heard Video to be launched July 2020
6. Report showing the reach and impact of online safety messages	Chair of Performance and Delivery Group (Chair: Deputy	Explore concerns further with young people, utilizing existing participation arrangements.	March 2021

	Director Children's Services Rutland County Council)	Seek assurance report from appropriate partnership/agency.	
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3. Mental Health

What will success look like?

- The emotional and mental health needs of children with learning disabilities and/or autism are understood in the context of safeguarding and support for this group of children is in place as required to reduce risk.
- Safeguarding and mental health support for children is joined up and partners work together and with young people to reduce risk of harm.

Key Deliverables	Lead	Activity	Timescale
1. Enhance and align safeguarding children and mental health procedures	Chair of Mental Health Task and Finish Group (Head of Service, Safeguarding Improvement and Quality Assurance, Leicestershire County Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope LLR partnership requirements • Confirm terms of reference • Update or create relevant policies and procedures for the partnerships 	March 2021
2. Clear procedures and pathways in meeting emotional and mental health needs in the context of safeguarding children	Chair of Performance and Delivery Group (Chair: Deputy Director Children's Services Rutland County Council)	Scope out the work required regarding the emotional and mental health of needs of children with learning disabilities and/or autism in the context of safeguarding and allocate work to subgroups accordingly / set up new task and finish group if required	Scoping to be complete by November 2020 with a view to required work being completed by March 2021

4. Communications

What will success look like?

- People who work or live in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland report child abuse and neglect and concerns they are aware of.

Key Deliverables	Lead	Activity	Timescale
1. LLR media/comms campaign that raises awareness of how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns (including in the context of COVID-19)	LLR Safeguarding Partners with support of the business managers and comms leads	<p>Agree key messages and develop a media / comms campaign which is implemented across the partnerships, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media key messages and assets • Posters • Leaflets which are available in places such as supermarkets, and disseminated to households across the partnerships 	<p>Social media campaign to be in place by April 2020</p> <p>Posters and leaflets to be developed and disseminated May 2020 onwards</p> <p>Continue throughout business year</p>

5. Domestic Abuse

What will success look like?

- The partnership is assured that there are appropriate support and interventions for children living with domestic abuse.

Key Deliverables	Lead	Activity	Timescale
1. Receive assurance from partners and the Vulnerability Board that partnerships are responding appropriately to children living with domestic abuse.	Chair of Performance and Delivery Group (Chair: Deputy Director Children's Services Rutland County Council)	<p>Request and receive assurance i.e. from Audit and Assurance Group, via S11 audit, through quarterly reporting mechanisms, that effective support and interventions are in place for children who are living with domestic abuse (including young people affected by domestic abuse in their intimate partner relationships).</p> <p>Use and enhance established links with LLR</p>	<p>Throughout the business year</p> <p>March 2021</p>

		Vulnerability Executive and Community Safety Partnerships (who oversee the operational work of multi-agency domestic abuse interventions across the partnerships) to ensure that appropriate assurance is received.	
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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS AND
COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report for 2019/20.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 2 The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 sets out the policy framework against which children's social care complaints should be considered.
- 3 Local authorities must, each financial year, publish an Annual Report (Regulation 13(3)).

Background

- 4 The Complaints Team, which sits within the Corporate Resources Department of the County Council, manage and co-ordinate complaints relating to three separate complaints system:
 - a) Adult Social Care - a statutory process
 - b) Children's Social Care – a statutory process
 - c) Corporate Complaints – a non-statutory process, which considers complaints relating to other services provided by the Council and where there is no other form of redress.

The Children and Family Services Department is contacted daily by service users, carers and other parties with concerns or requests for information. These queries are dealt with at a local level within care teams or through the Director's office without recourse to the formal complaints process. The complaints team do, on occasion, also receive queries and concerns that suggest a child or young person may require immediate support or which raise safeguarding concerns. Such reports are best handled outside of the formal complaints procedure and are referred into the First Response team or allocated workers for urgent consideration as appropriate

- 5 The Annual Report for Children's Social Care is attached as Appendix A to the report and provides a summary of the statistical information and headline issues emerging from the analysis of complaints activity for 2019/20, along with the Department's planned activity to respond to this.

Complaints received and outcomes

- 6 The number of complaints received in 2019/20 were as follows:
- 118 complaints considered at Stage 1, compared to 134 in 2018/19
 - 14 complaints considered at Stage 2, compared to 9 in 2018/19
 - 5 complaints considered at Stage 3, compared to 4 in 2018/19
- 7 Using the figures on numbers of referrals made to Children's Social Care, 3.0% of those using children's services needed to make a complaint. This is a very slight reduction on last year (-0.1%).
- 8 The number of requests accepted at Stage 1 decreased this year, the first time for three years that this has been the case.
- 9 Following fresh guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman during the year, many complaints that would previously have been considered under the statutory procedure were responded to under the single-stage corporate procedure.
- 10 Despite the above there has still been an overall reduction as detailed below

Financial Year	Statutory Complaints	Corporate Complaints	Total
2018-19	134	27	161
2019-20	118	54	172

- 11 Complaints escalating to stages 2 and 3 both increased this year with 14 complaints (12%) requesting independent investigation. This includes one instance where the Complaints Manager exercised his duty to escalate after delay at Stage 1.
- 12 Analysis of the complaints received show the main area complained about continues to be "Professional Decision making" cited in 36 cases. After a significant rise last year, pleasingly complainants focusing on delays in completing work fell from 29 to 18 instances reflecting some positive changes made to working practices and increased stability within locality teams.
- 13 During the year, two complaints were received directly from children or young people with a further six represented by Children's Rights Officers. This is an increase of one from 2018-19 but as ever this figure remains quite low. The Complaints Manager continues to have good links with Children's Rights Officers. This is to ensure and validate that young people are not blocked in any way from accessing the formal complaints procedure.
- 14 79 of the complaints at Stage 1 (75%) were responded to within the statutory maximum of 20 working days. This is very slightly down from 2018-19 (97 or 77%)
- 15 There are often good reasons why complaints can exceed 20 working days to resolve, for example meetings being arranged. Whilst personal contact is positive and should be encouraged, statutory guidance makes clear this does not "stop the clock" in terms of the 20-working day deadline.

- 16 Similarly, the statutory procedures allow for the local authority to pause a complaint whilst attempts are made to resolve matters through other processes (alternative dispute resolution)
- 17 The County Council received criticism by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman this year that there was too much time taken on alternative dispute resolution. Since then the procedures have been amended to have a three-month time limit unless expressly agreed by both parties.
- 18 Timescales for Stage 2 complaints have improved this year with four of the seven completed investigations meeting the very tight statutory timescale. This builds on the positive progress made last year following the new commissioning arrangements.
- 19 Four of the five Stage 3 Review Panels held were convened and responded to within statutory timescales (80%). The exception was a challenging case that required two panel hearings and pre-dates changes in use of independent resources.
- 20 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigated eleven complaints relating to Children's Social Care during 2019-20 and found fault in six instances. This is a significant increase on 2018/19 where fault was found in just two instances.
- 21 Financial payments totalling £2,200 were requested by the Ombudsman this year along with recommendations to review policies and procedures, strengthen joint complaint handling with partner organisations and take steps to improve management oversight of cases.
- 22 39 compliments were received and forwarded to the Complaints Manager during 2019-20. This is a slight decrease on last year (49). The Complaints team continue to remind managers of the importance of recognising and sharing positive feedback, which bring balance to the annual report.
- 23 Case studies can be a helpful way of setting out actions taken by the department in response to complaints and four examples are set out within the Annual Report showing clear examples of how complaints are driving service improvement.

Resource Implications

- 24 The Annual Report outlines that the costs incurred through the complaints procedure were £65,250, an increase of £16,500 from 2018/19. This is driven largely by the increase in Stage 3 panel hearings.
- 25 Improvement activity will be carried out within existing resources and therefore there are no resource implications. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report.

Conclusions

- 26 There has been a slight reduction in overall complaints regarding Children's Social Care this year. This marks the first such reduction for several years.

- 27 Several themes have been identified and discussed with managers and senior practitioners to inform service improvement. It is a positive that complaints intelligence has been able to inform clear service improvements that are required.
- 28 There has also been important learning from complaints considered independently this year and although this has resulted in additional cost pressures, a number of positive actions have been taken as a direct result of this learning.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Childrens Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments: Annual Report - April 2019-March 2020

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 29 The Children and Family Services Department supports vulnerable children and young people from across all communities in Leicestershire. Complaints and compliments are a way of ensuring that service responses are fair and equitable to all. This report does not highlight any specific equal opportunities implications.

Children's Social Care



Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2019/2020

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1. Purpose and Summary of Report

- 1.1. To report to Members and Officers on Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) Children's Social Care complaints activity from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- 1.2. To meet the requirements of Regulation 18(2) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1681 Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and Regulation 13(3) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738 The Children Act (1989) Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- 1.3. For the current year the following Statutory guidance remains relevant:
 - Getting the best from Complaints 2006
- 1.4. This annual report provides analysis and commentary for Children and Family Services on all complaints managed under the statutory process. Those complainants who do not qualify to use the statutory process are considered under the County Council's Corporate Complaint procedure and reported in the Corporate Annual Report presented to the Scrutiny Commission.
- 1.5. The Complaints Manager role is responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled appropriately and providing support to the department in resolving complex cases. In addition, the Complaints Manager will highlight key trends that emerge each year and any recommendations that would improve how we work. The Children and Family Services department retain responsibility for actioning any such improvements.

2. Complaints and compliments received 2019-20

2.1. Foreword

This report only considers complaints identified as statutory complaints as defined by the Statutory Guidance outlined within “Getting the Best from complaints”

There are two key tests applied in making the above assessment.

- 1) Is the complainant eligible?
- 2) Is the subject matter within scope of the procedure?

Concerns that fall outside of the scope of the statutory complaints procedure are responded to by the Complaints and Information team and are then handled in line with the relevant alternative route which typically includes

- Consideration as a corporate complaint
- Referral to the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCB) appeals procedure
- Explanation that the matter cannot be considered as the subject matter has / will be adjudicated in Court

2.2. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Fact Sheet on Children Act complaints

In 2019, the Ombudsman issued new guidance on how to assess whether a complaint should be considered as statutory or corporate. The Complaints and Information team use this routinely when triaging complaints.

The key change is the concept of “following the injustice”. This means that if an adult is making the complaint and it is about perceived injustice to them, this will be considered under the corporate process. This has seen a shift towards more Child Protection complaints being managed as corporate complaints will be seen later within this report.

2.3. Complaint Volumes

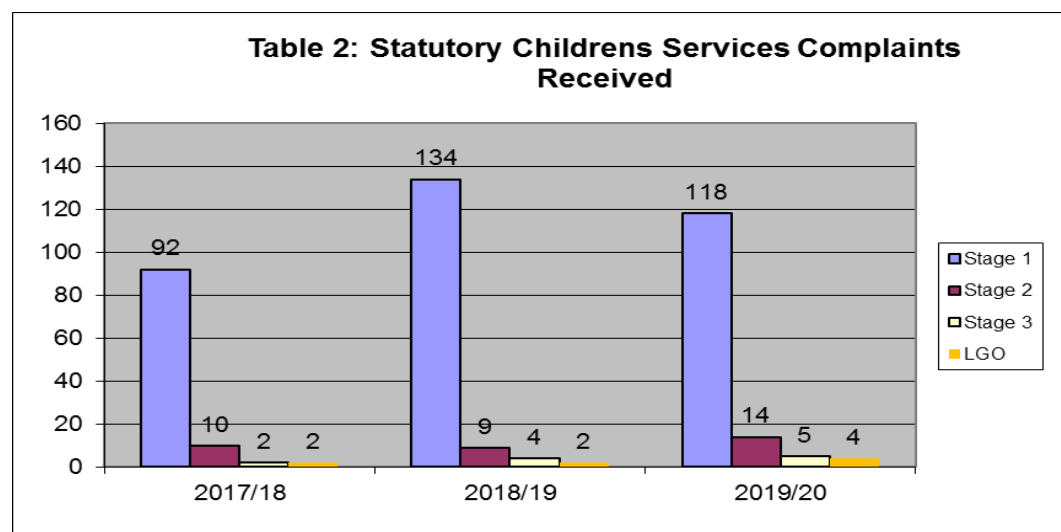
Volumes of complaints are considered in the light of the number of cases which the Children’s Social Care dealt with during the year. Table 1 shows the key referral categories and the increased demand on services.

Table 1 – Social Care demand	2018/19	2019/20	% Change 18/19 to 19/20
Referrals to Children's Social Care	5214	5571	+6.8%
Single Assessments	4152	5141	+23.8%
Children in Care at 31 March	584	642	+9.9%
Child Protection Plans at 31 March	388	504	+29.9%

There has been an increase in all the above categories, with noteworthy increases for Child Protection Plans and Single Assessments.

To provide context to complaint volumes, the number of referrals to Children's Social Care in Table 1 has been used and this shows that 3.0% go on to make a formal complaint (3.1% in 2018-19).

As illustrated below (Table 2), the total number of statutory complaints reduced from the previous year (-12%). However there has been a significant increase in the number of complainants seeking escalation to Stage 2 and 3 of the process.



Although it is encouraging to see a reduction of Stage 1 complaints this year, some caution must be taken in directly comparing the two figures. This is for the reasons already explained that more are being considered as Corporate Complaints than in previous years.

To demonstrate this better, Table 3 contrasts the breakdown of all social care complaints for the last 2 years. This shows that there has been a slight reduction in the number of complaints.

Table 3: All Complaints about Childrens Social Care

Financial Year	Statutory Complaints	Corporate Complaints	Total
2018-19	134	27	161
2019-20	118	54	172

2.4. Complaints accepted at stages 2 & 3

The number of requests considered at Stage 2 of the process increased by 5 compared with the previous year. As a percentage of Stage 1 complaints this represents 12% an increase of 4% on previous year.

Five Stage 3 panels were convened during the year and from these 3 went on to make a referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

One complainant elected to make an early referral to the Ombudsman instead of requesting a Stage 3 panel hearing.

Stage 3 Panels cannot re-investigate complaints and as such can only look at the quality and comprehensiveness of the Independent report at Stage 2. Although the panel's remit is clearly explained to complainants, it is a factor in the poor resolution rates at this stage of the process.

As referenced in last year's Annual Report, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) take a rigid approach on consideration of early referrals. The implications are that it is more important than ever to be clear at the outset which complaints procedure should be used. Once the statutory procedure has been initiated, the LGO expects all stages to be completed.

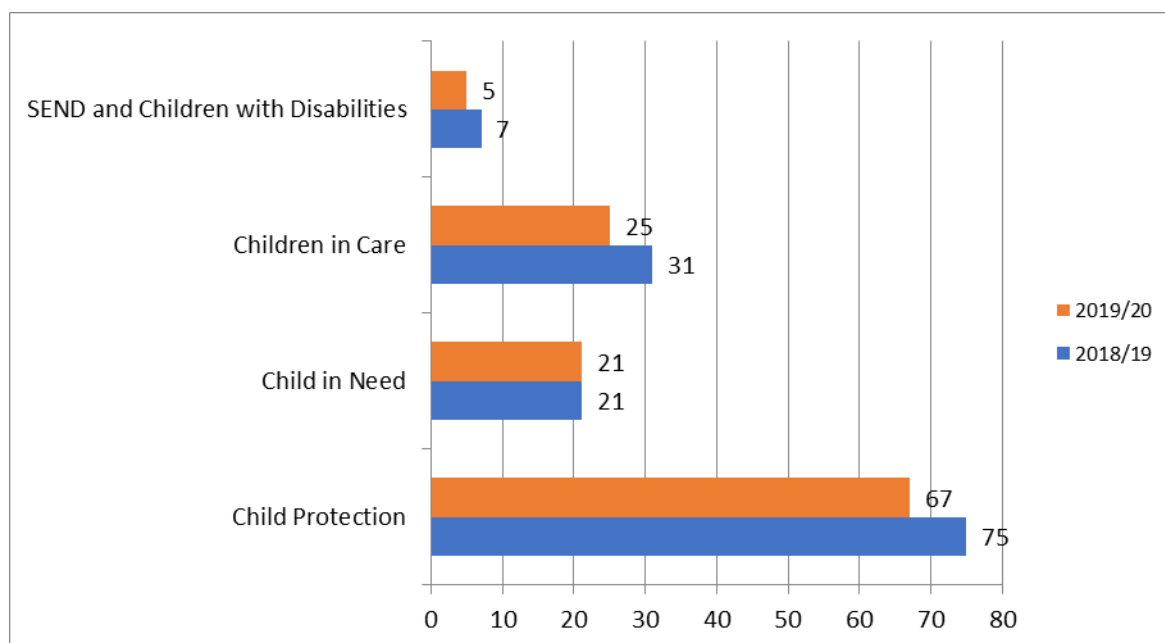
This has implications for the department and highlights the need to ensure every effort is made to resolve complaints at Stage 1 of the process.

2.5. Statutory complaints by Service area

The Complaints Manager records all statutory complaints at a service level and table 4 below shows the results for 2019-20 overlaid against the previous year.

There is little variance from previous year with most complaints about Child Protection matters.

Table 4: Complaints received by Service Area



2.5 Compliments received

During 2019-20 there were 39 compliments recorded regarding Children's Social Care officers. This is a slight decrease from previous year (49).

Compliments have been received for all services with the majority being received about the Children in Care service (31)

A selection of the positive comments received appears in Appendix A and provides an important balance when reviewing the performance of the department.

3 Service Performance 2019-20

The key performance indicators for speed of response, outcomes, causes and identified learning are linked to complaints that have been *resolved* within any given reporting period rather than received.

This is important as it ensures that full data sets can be presented, both to departments on a quarterly basis, and at year end. It also avoids the scenario whereby Ombudsman findings of maladministration might not appear in annual reports (where outcomes are not known at the time of production).

It follows from the above that the figures presented below will not match the data presented in section two of this report which focused on complaints *received*.

3.1. Responsiveness to complaints

Table 5: Children's Services Performance at stage 1

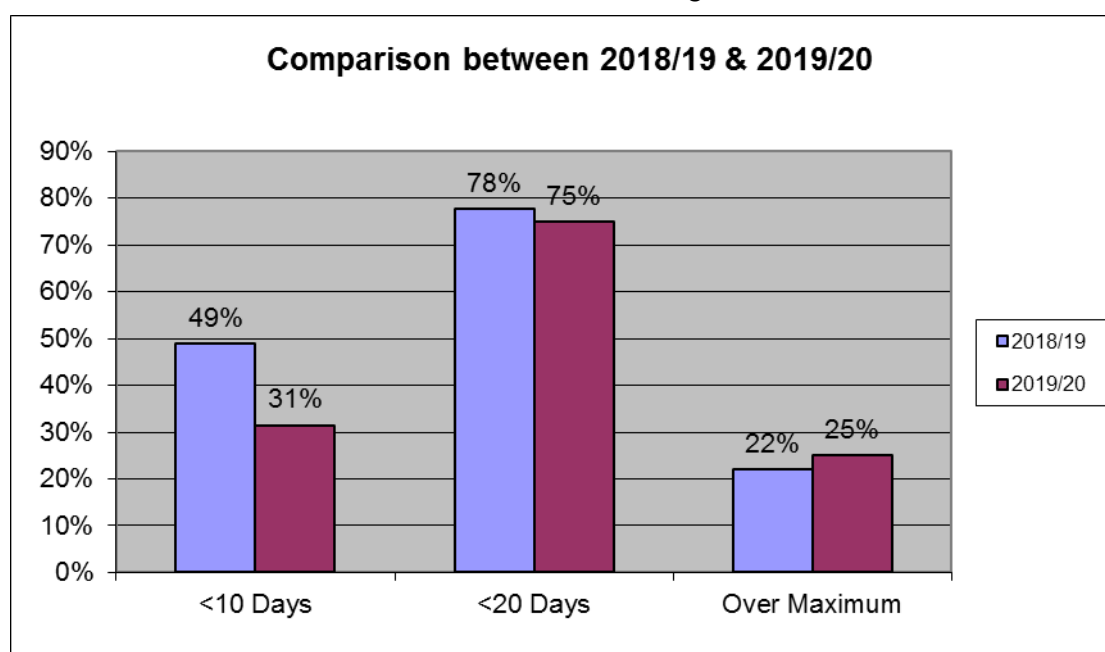
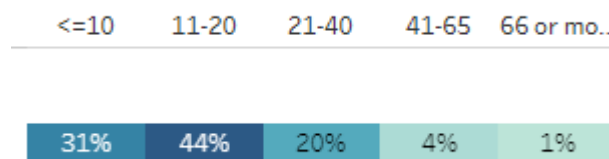


Table 5 above details the time taken to respond to complaints at Stage 1 and provides a comparison between last year and the current reporting year.

Whilst performance remains comparable at the 20-working day mark, it is important to note that there are significantly less complaints responded to within 10 working days.

Statutory guidance sets out an expectation that “the majority” of complaints should be resolved within 10 working days with 20 working days considered reasonable for “complex cases”. Whilst the nature of social care complaints often has complexity, more work with the department is planned to improve the response rates in the year ahead including running workshops with the department.

In last years report, it was agreed to add some further detail showing the response rates for those complaints over 20 working days and this detail is set out below



The above provides re-assurance that very low levels of complaints at Stage 1 (5) are exceeding 40 working days to respond to. This includes those cases where alternative dispute resolution is agreed (e.g. meetings)

It is important to stress that, where complainants have not agreed an extension and there is no good reason for a complaint to exceed 20 working days, the Complaints Manager is duty bound to offer a Stage 2 investigation.

The Complaints Manager had to exercise this duty once during the year.

Response timescales at Stage 2

Completion of Stage 2 investigations within the statutory guidelines (65 working days) was flagged in last year's report as in need of improvement with just 3 out of the ten completed investigations meeting the statutory 65 working days.

This has improved during the year following the changes made to commissioning arrangements with 4 of 7 completed investigations within statutory timescales (57%) The longest was 107 working days.

The key point of delay appears to be at the outset of the Investigation with Investigators wanting to ensure they have an approved record of complaint even if there is already a formal complaint in writing. Whilst it is accepted that the initial meeting is vital in being clear on the scope, the Ombudsman has issued decisions making clear that the clock cannot be stopped at this point.

The Ombudsman has however indicated that providing the Local Authority is managing the expectations of a complainant and not unduly delaying resolution, there is unlikely to be criticism of not meeting this timescale.

Response timescales at Stage 3

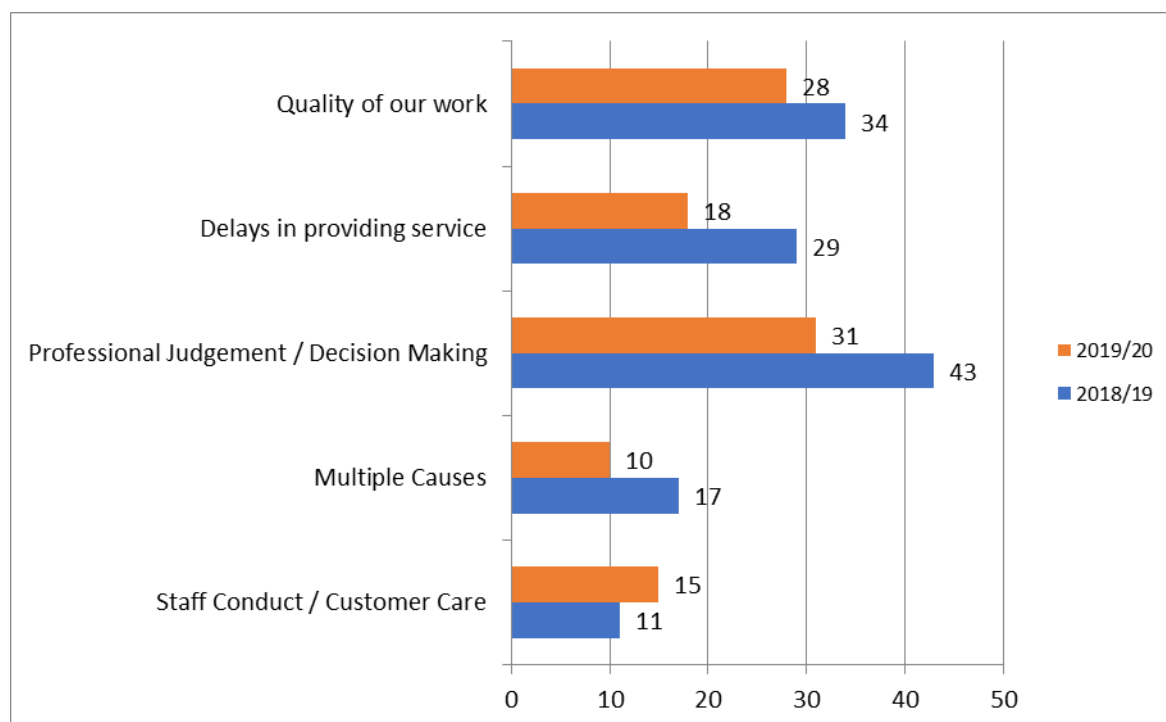
5 Panel hearings were held during the year and of these 4 were arranged and responded to within the statutory timescales (80%)

The other case required two panel hearings taking it outside of timescales

3.2. Complaint Causes

To try to understand the main causes leading to complaints, the complaints team assess the underlying principal cause for each complaint determined. The results for both 2018-19 and 2019-20 are shown below in table 6.

Table 6 – What were complaints about?



The biggest single area continues to be disputed decision making or professional judgement which represented the primary theme in 31 instances.

It is recognised that the nature of our involvement with families will often mean differing viewpoints (and resulting tensions) will be inevitable on some occasions.

The biggest change was the reduction in complaints citing delay or lack of communication which decreased by 38%. In particular; significant improvements were seen at First Response.

3.3. Who complains?

In 2019/20, two complaints were made directly by children or young people. A further 6 were represented by members of the Childrens Rights team taking the total to 8. This is higher than in 2018-19 when 4 cases were received and represents 7% of the overall volume.

It is not unusual for numbers of complaints made by young persons to be low and this mirrors the situation reported by regional colleagues.

It remains a key priority of the Complaints Manager to ensure that everything is being done to improve accessibility of the complaints process to our children and young people and there continue to be good links between the Children's Rights Officers and Complaints. Regular discussions are held to ensure and check that appropriate processes are followed to resolve issues.

Most complaints continue to be made by parents or family members (where they have sufficient interest in the child or young person's welfare.¹)

3.4. Complaint Outcomes

Table 7: Children's Services complaints recorded by outcome

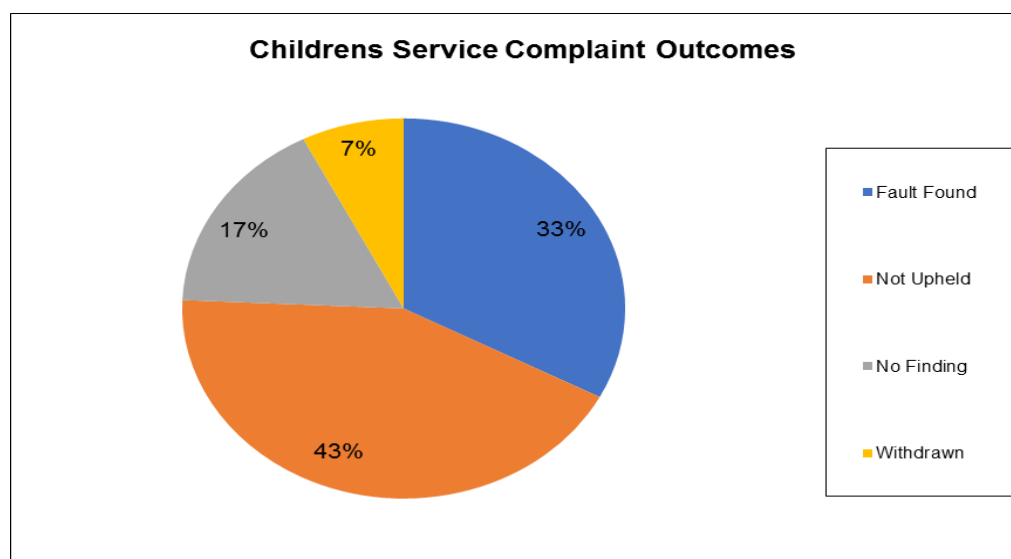


Table 7 above shows that fault was found in 35 (33%) of the complaints considered during the year. This is slightly down from 2018-19 (35%)

It is important to note that a finding of fault is not necessarily a bad thing as it can also be a sign of greater maturity within complaints handling. It is always important to listen to what we are being told about our service to put matters right at the earliest opportunity, and to learn and improve. Managers are also encouraged not to handle complaints defensively and this is evidenced in a number of cases whereby we have accepted that there are opportunities to improve.

In some cases, complaints are not able to be determined as there are irreconcilable versions of events. In these situations, rather than record the complaint as "Not Upheld", the complaints team will instead record them as "No Finding" which more accurately reflects the outcome. This will also include some complaints whereby the Court process is the appropriate forum to make a finding.

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

4. Financial Implications

Children's Service Complaints expenditure

Both Stages 2 and 3 of the statutory complaints procedure require independent investigation to take place.

At Stage 2, the authority is required to appoint an Investigative Officer who must not work in the same area as the complaint being investigated and be suitably trained to carry out investigative work.

Whilst it is not mandatory that this role is appointed externally, the County Council's current policy is to do so. In addition to the Investigative Officer, the Regulations also require an Independent Person to be appointed to ensure the investigation is carried out fairly. This is a mandatory requirement.

At Stage 3, the procedure is for a panel hearing to be held to review the Stage 2 investigation. This involves the appointment of 3 external panel members.

Leicestershire County Council can also explore independent mediation as an alternative form of redress through Stages 2 or 3. Mediation has not been used this year for any cases.

There have however been several conciliation meetings chaired by the Complaints Manager with the emphasis on resolving complaints between Stages 1 and 2. A well-planned conciliation meeting can offer a better and more appropriate remedy for complainants.

Finally, on rare occasions, financial redress is offered as part of the Complaints procedure. Usually this is by way of a Local Settlement with the Ombudsman but can also be recommended at either Stage 2 or 3 of the procedure.

Table 8 below details the total costs incurred during the last 3 financial years. All costs are re-charged directly to the department.

Table 8 Costs incurred through complaints procedure²

Spend	Total 2017/18	Total 2018/19	Total 2019/20
Stage 2 Costs	£31,340	£42,260	£46,050
Stage 3	£7,150	£5,980	£17,000
Mediation	£0	£0	£0
Financial Redress	£150	£510	£2,200
Total	£38,640	£48,750	£65,250

² Figures are rounded up to nearest £10. One Stage 3 panel costs remain outstanding at date of issue

Costs incurred for 2019/20 represent a further increase on previous year. It is important to note that there can sometimes be a lag between complaint completion and invoices being received hence some costs from 2018-19 may be included.

Stage 2 costs have largely been controlled despite the increased activity. This reflects more concise investigations being undertaken. Stage 3 costs have however increased significantly both due to volume and complexity.

Costs of £2,200 have also been incurred following adverse findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2019-20. Further details on these cases appear in section 6

The above highlights the importance of resolving complaints as early as possible

Costs continue to be controlled through several ways including:

- Complaints Team proactively looking for opportunities to resolve via meetings if any prospect of success.
- Ensuring that complainants are eligible to use the statutory complaints procedure
- Imposition of restrictions to the scope of some independent investigations. Typically, around matters that have been determined in the Court arena.

5. Learning from Complaints

Complaints are a valuable source of information which can help to identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements. We know that numbers alone do not tell everything about the attitude towards complaints and how they are responded to locally. Arguably of more importance is to understand the impact those complaints have on people and to learn the lessons from complaints to improve the experience for others.

Lessons can usually be learned from complaints that were upheld and, in some instances, where no fault was found and where the Authority identifies that improvements to services can be made.

Occasionally during an investigation issues will be identified that need to be addressed over and above the original complaint. The Complaints Team will always try to look at the “bigger picture” to ensure that residents receive the best possible service from the Council.

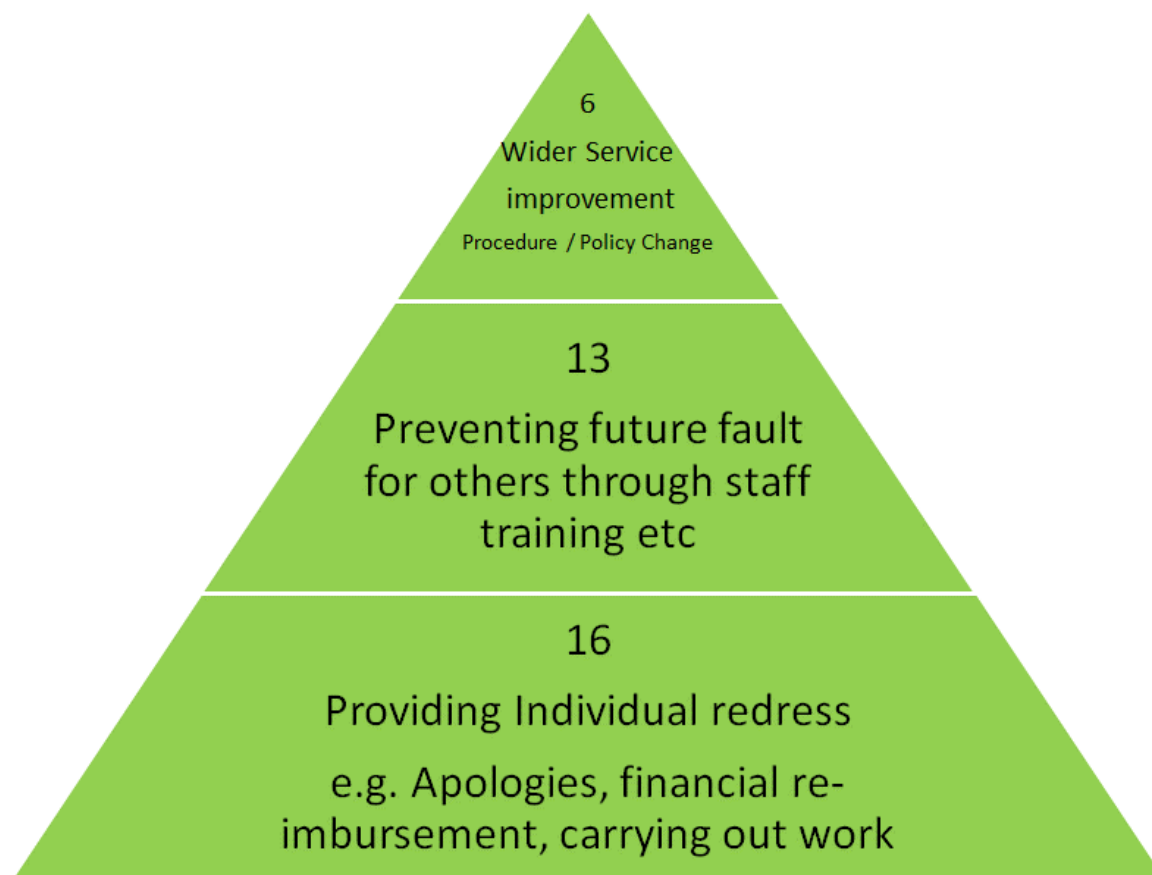
5.1 Corrective action taken

All the 35 complaints where fault has been found have been reviewed by the Complaints Team to ascertain what action the relevant department has taken, both in remedying the fault, and any wider learning to avoid such issues occurring in the future.

Remedial action typically consists of both individual redress (e.g. apology, carrying out overdue work) and wider actions that may affect many. This very often includes staff re-training but also on occasions consists of policy / procedural changes.

Table 8 (overleaf) depicts the actions taken during 2019-20. This shows that in 19 complaints (54%), clear actions were identified which should improve service for other members of the public. The most common of these is staff training, followed by carrying out a review of local policies and seeking additional resources to help with demand.

This figure is higher than in 2018-19 (30%) showing good evidence that Managers are not just focused on responding to the issues but are looking at what needs to happen to prevent repeat occurrence.

Table 8: Actions taken for upheld complaints 2019-20

5.2 Service Improvements during 2019-20

Research shows that a primary driver for making complaints is so that lessons can be learned, and processes improved. It is also a key part of an effective complaints procedure to demonstrate this organisational learning so that in turn the public can feel confident that complaints do make a difference.

Case studies can be a powerful way of promoting this and to illustrate some of the positive action taken this year from complaints, four such examples are set out below:

5.2.1. Lack of clear and effective communication with family

A parent raised complaints about the lack of continuity of case management and repeated calls not being returned. They lacked clarity on the trajectory planning for the case

The complaint investigation found there had been several changes of social worker and this had impacted on the continuity. There were also clear examples of calls not being returned and documents not being sent as promptly as they should.

Actions taken

The locality office was struggling with stability of the workforce during this period and several unexpected events led to worker changes. To mitigate against this the Manager reminded all her team of the need to ensure 3 monthly case summaries were completed so that should others need to step in the picture was clear without repeated conversations with the family.

Practice standards have been created and launched which set out the expectations of all workers around timely communications with families. Additional manager capacity was also brought in to help monitor cases and provide targeted support as required.

5.2.2. B's Story – Insufficient understanding and recognition of Domestic Abuse

As part of a broader complaint, B contacted the Council unhappy that she felt compelled to attend a Conference with her ex-partner who she had suffered domestic abuse from. She felt that throughout working with Childrens Services the allocated worker had not given due consideration to Domestic Abuse within assessments.

Actions taken

The Council's investigation found that a split conference should clearly have been offered in this instance. Although our policy allowed for this and indeed there have been many examples where this is used, there was a need for refresher training with all IROs to ensure they were offering this provision appropriately.

There were also wider learning needs identified for the department around strengthening how we work with families where domestic abuse may be a factor which have been taken forward following this learning.

5.2.3. C's Story – Frustration with delay in responding to a complaint

C contacted the Council unhappy with the support being offered to their disabled son. The Council were in the process of carrying out a fresh assessment and sought to place the complaint on hold whilst this process was carried out. There followed a protracted period of correspondence over the assessment which ended in a formal complaint again being submitted some 7 months later.

Actions taken

Following an Independent Investigation, the Council accepted that it had not managed this period of “alternative dispute resolution” tightly enough. This led to a lengthy period before the complaint was then made.

In response the Council changed its complaints procedure and guidance to add a maximum period in which any attempts at alternative dispute resolution should be finalised and thereby mitigating timely resolution of the issues.

5.2.4. A lack of information on support that is available to adopters

Mr and Mrs E complained that there was insufficient knowledge and hence communication of the support that the LA could provide adopters. E’s experience was of lots of chasing and very little clear action. There was a lengthy delay in accessing Adoption Support Fund and seemingly a lack of knowledge of this within the social work team

Actions taken

The Council’s investigation accepted that there was insufficient communication with the complainants.

It was known that there was an issue with the lack of specialist knowledge of this area within the locality teams. This had already been fixed by the time this complaint was made with the creation of a specialist unit in the Adoption service.

The value of this new team was recognised by the complainants who could clearly see the benefits of working with the new team.

6. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) made 12 new enquiries of the Council during 2019-20. This included complaints around Child Protection, Child in Need, Adoption and First Response. This was an increase of four from 2018-19.

The Ombudsman made decisions on eleven complaints which related to children's social care during the year, with fault found in six instances (55%). This is a significant increase from last year where just two findings of fault were received.

A summary of the complaints considered, and their respective outcomes appears below.

- 5 Outside of Jurisdiction or where at an assessment stage the Ombudsman felt unlikely it would achieve anything through further investigation

Four of these complaints focused on reports that had already been considered within the Court arena. These were not recorded as Stage 1 complaints for the same reasons. The Ombudsman accepted the Council's position in each instance.

- 6 findings of Fault with Injustice

CASE 1 – Concerned the Council's failure to engage appropriately with a parent through the Child Protection Process and delay in dealing with his complaints. Specific concerns included inaccurate record-keeping and a lack of consideration of mental health needs.

The Council had already accepted several failings and apologised within our local complaints process, but the Ombudsman recommended an additional compensatory payment of £900 and reviews of their complaints handling procedure and file supervision arrangements.

The Council accepted the decision and carried out the above actions.

CASE 2 – A complaint from a family member regarding use of inaccurate information about him within the context of assessments.

This was handled under our Corporate Complaints procedure and it was accepted that we had recorded wrong information. An apology was provided, and the assessment corrected. The Ombudsman were satisfied with the actions taken by the Council and did not recommend any further action

CASE 3 – A complaint that the Council un-necessarily delayed in making decisions within the context of a Child Protection plan. The Council had already accepted there was undue delay and mis-communication, but the complainant remained dis-satisfied.

The Ombudsman asked the Council to provide a further apology and to make a small financial payment of £300 in recognition of the delay.

CASE 4 – A joint investigation of Leicestershire Partnership Trust and the Council into how they responded to a case of alleged Fabricated Induced Illness (FII).

The Ombudsman found several faults in how the organisations worked collaboratively and some failure in following the statutory procedures.

The LSCB oversaw a full review of procedures and a payment of £500 was made in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant.

CASE 5 – A complaint about the Council's handling of disabled facilities grant applications for her, her husband and two children. The Ombudsman found there was fault with the Council's approach to the process, leading to unnecessary delay and distress. However, it was entitled to decide it needed more evidence to conclude her son's assessment.

The Council accepted the Ombudsman's recommendation to remedy the injustice caused by making a financial payment of £500 and writing to confirm where matters currently stood.

CASE 6 – A complaint that the Council left her to deal with a building contractor after 2015, when shoddy works to adapt their home were carried out and that it has since failed to re-assess her daughter as a child-in-need

The Ombudsman found that the Council failed for six months, after it unequivocally knew about the failed adaptations, to recognise its duties to re-assess to determine whether threshold was met for Child in Need support.

The Council agreed to carry out this assessment and apologise to the parent.

7. Monitoring the Process

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

1. Complaints advice and support
2. Commissioning and administrative support for all Independent Investigations
3. Production of Performance Reports
4. Liaison with Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
5. Quality Assurance of complaint responses
6. Complaint handling training for Operational Managers

Assistance continues to be routinely provided to Heads of Service in drafting adjudication responses to Stage 2 investigations. This helps ensure a consistency of response and that clear action plans are created. Following some criticism of the quality of one response this year, revised templates are now in use.

The Complaints Manager meets regularly with the Heads of Service and periodically also attends the Children's Social Care Services Senior Management Team to talk through complaints matters. The Complaints Manager also attends an annual Practice Summit for all practitioners to share and discuss the key complaint themes.

8. Concluding Comments

It is positive to see a reduction in Stage 1 complaints this year. Although a factor behind this is the revised LGO guidance and more being handled under the corporate procedure, there is overall a reduction for the first time in 3 years.

As there is often a lag between escalation through the stages so it remains to be seen whether this will translate to reduced activity at Stages 2 and 3.

As highlighted within this report, there are good examples of process change and staff training this year across the board including extensive work done on practice standards and how we manage case conferences. These should help reduce complaints moving forwards.

The complaints training being delivered to Team Managers provides a range of tools and techniques to help with this and to help improve consistency and quality of complaint responses across the board.

APPENDIX A – Sample of compliments received

Below is a selection of the positive recognition the social care department has received during the 2019-20 year.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

- “Thank you to B for your excellent work and professionalism with CAFCASS”– **CHILD PROTECTION (LOUGHBOROUGH)**
- “Lovely feedback in relation to care proceedings” **CHILD PROTECTION (HINCKLEY)**
- “Thankful to B for such a great positive experience. Dealt with query rapidly” – **CHILD PROTECTION**
- “Thanks to A SW who has been a really great help and changed my view of social services” – **CHILD PROTECTION (BASSETT STREET)**

CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICES

- “Care Home Manager impressed by Participation Officer achieving great result with resident engaging with the Children in Care Council” – **CHILDRENS RIGHTS TEAM**
- “Really good work from the adoption social worker - brilliant manner and approach” - **ADOPTION TEAM**
- “New adoption magazine well received. Thanks very much” – **ADOPTION TEAM**
- “Really good work from the adoption social worker - brilliant manner and approach” - **ADOPTION TEAM**
- “Compliment for L who has made huge difference to child's life as adoption social worker” – **ADOPTION TEAM**
- “Felt the adoption social worker was really good and engaged well with all the family” – **ADOPTION TEAM**
- “Compliments on the SGO Newsletter really well put together” – **ADOPTION TEAM**

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CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1ST SEPTEMBER 2020

QUARTER 1 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with an update of the Children and Family Services Department's performance for the period April to June 2020 (Quarter 1).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children and Family Services Department's performance is reported to the Committee in accordance with the Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

Background

3. A Strategic Plan 2018-2022 has been agreed by the Council and has recently been refreshed. Children and Families Services has also produced a Departmental Plan 2020 -2023 which identifies a number of ambitions and measures to monitor progress. The following report and accompanying dashboard aim to report on priority areas identified by both plans and monitor performance of key indicators on a quarterly basis. The current performance dashboard is attached as Appendix A, and this has been refreshed to concentrate on indicators where new data is available for Quarter 1.
4. The United Kingdom entered a period of lockdown from March 23, 2020. The data included in the report reflects the first full quarter of activity in this period.
5. Due to the closure of schools, no school inspection data or education outcome data is available.
6. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.

Overview

7. From 27 measures that have been reported, 9 have improved, 5 show no significant change and seven have declined. In addition to this, 6 indicators provide information only with no polarity.

8. From 15 measures that have a national benchmark, four are in the top quartile, five are in the second quartile, three are in the third quartile and three are in the fourth quartile. Quartiles are based on the more stable COVID-19 period so should be treated with caution.

Helping children in Leicestershire live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments

9. Local Authority comparisons used are figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking. All local authorities saw significant disruptions to 'business as usual activities' in quarter 1 and it should be acknowledged that nationally published figures reflect pre-COVID 19 activity.
10. The number of 'Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales' was 94.9% in quarter 1. This is 2.4% higher than quarter 4 and places Leicestershire in the second quartile of all local authorities by available.
11. The percentage of 'Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time' increased by 5% to 26.4% (62 children) in quarter 1. This would be in the fourth quartile by previously published benchmarks.
12. The percentage of re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months was 26.4% (312) children) in quarter 1, a rise of 7.7% from the previous quarter. This would be in the fourth quartile by previously published benchmarks.
13. Work to respond to the issue of repeat referrals and repeat plans has been taking place in quarter 2 by audit work. This will inform action to respond to these key performance measure
14. The percentage of 'single assessments completed within 45 days' was 90.4%. This represents 1104 assessments and is 3.6% lower than quarter 4. The Leicestershire figure is in the second quartile nationally and better than statistical neighbour comparisons.
15. Two Child Protection plans lasting two years or more were open at the end of quarter 1, representing 0.3% of cases. This is the same number as quarter 4. The current figure places Leicestershire in the second quartile of local authorities using available comparators.
16. The 'percentage of children with three or more placements during the year' was 7.3% (48 children). This is an improvement on quarter 4 and places Leicestershire in the top quartile nationally. The 'percentage of children in the same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption' was 55.6% (127 children). This is lower than quarter 4 would be in the fourth quartile by previously published benchmarks. However, the Quality Assurance and Improvement Team have investigated this and believe there is an issue with the data for this report being drawn from the electronic recording system. This will be confirmed and addressed in the next month.
17. The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 84.6% at the end of quarter 4 (33 young people). This is lower than quarter 4 and would place Leicestershire in the third quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
18. The percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training was 61.7% at the end of quarter 1 (24 young people). This is higher than quarter 4

and places Leicestershire in the top quartile by comparison with other local authorities.

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19. The service provides careful oversight to the care leaver indicator and is driven by a corporate commitment for creating mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.
20. The percentage of 'Children in Care who have had a dental check' was 61.7% (406 children). This is lower than quarter 4 when the proportion was 75%. It should be noted that routine dental treatment has been suspended during the period of CV-19 lockdown which accounts for the decrease in dental checks for children in care. Full dental provision is not yet in place.
21. The percentage of 'Children in Care who have had an annual health assessment' within the last 12 months was 86% (566). This is similar to quarter 4. Completion of health assessments continues to be overseen by the Children in Care Head of Service and Service Manager, with specific actions identified to address delays and barriers including systems support, processes and staffing pressures. Both managers attend quarterly operational and strategic meetings with health partners to discuss and address the health needs of children in care and how best to meet these needs.

Helping children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity

22. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) has refreshed and improved recording of individuals and families using the service. However, data will not initially be comparable to that previously reported.
23. During Quarter 1, the CFWS worked with 3,622 individuals and 1,323 families across Leicestershire which is similar to numbers the previous year.
24. The Children and Families Services Departmental plan states the intention to support more young people in mainstream Leicestershire schools by increasing the number of children effectively supported by Special Educational Needs Support (SEN Support) and decreasing the number of cases which subsequently require an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).
25. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) was 1906 in the Spring 2020 school census. This is 339 higher than the Spring 2019 census.
26. The number of children in mainstream schools in Leicestershire without an EHCP but in receipt of SEN Support was 10,375. This is 240 higher than the Spring 2019 census.

People are safe in their daily lives

27. Youth Offending statistics are usually reported one or two quarters in arrears. This is because data has to be produced and validated by legal bodies such as the Police and courts before being released to local authorities.
28. The Q4 2019/20 figure (latest available) for 'first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17' was 30. This is an increase of six compared to the same period last year. The figures for the first-time entrants remain low compared to regional and national data.

29. The rate of re-offending per young offender for quarter 3 2019/20 (latest available) was 0.51 offences per offender. This is a significant decrease in the re-offending rate compared with the same period last year where the rate was 1.1.
30. Two young people were sentenced to custody during quarter 4 2019/20 (latest available). This figure is usually low, for example one or two, and is the same as number as the same period last year.

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early years

31. The percentage of eligible two-year and three-year olds taking up the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) is usually reported termly. Due to the impact of COVID-19 regulations, data is unavailable for this report. Many Childcare providers were required to close to all but key worker and vulnerable children.

Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential

32. The percentage of applicants obtaining their first preference for first time admission to primary school (i.e. children starting school for the first time) was 92.4% in 2020. This is higher than 2019 when the figure was 90.3% and is in the top quartile of all local authorities.
33. The percentage of pupils offered their first preference secondary school was 89.3%. This was similar to 2019 when the figure was 89.5% and is in the top quartile of all local authorities.
34. No school inspections took place during this period.
35. All school examinations and assessments were cancelled for the 2020 academic year. Any data subsequently published by the Department for Education will be reported.
36. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 735 at the end of quarter 1. This figure has been gradually rising during recent years, which is also the trend in other Local Authorities. This is new to the quarterly performance report and counts children where parents have chosen to educate their child at home, rather than the local authority providing tuition (for example, if a child cannot be in school due to medical reasons). This figure will be monitored on a quarterly basis.
37. Latest NEET data (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training), is for the end of June 2020 and shows a Leicestershire figure of 2.8% representing 374 young people. This is an increase of 102 young people compared to quarter 4 when the figure was 2%. This is consistent with increases amongst statistical neighbours where the average is also 2.8%.

Conclusion

38. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of Quarter 1 of 2020/21, covering the period April to June 2020.

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39. Details of all metrics will continue to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the year and any subsequent changes will be notified in future reports.

Background Papers

None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

40. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1, 2020/21

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

41. Addressing equalities issues is supported by this report, with a focus on vulnerable groups within Leicestershire, including children in care.

Education data relating to different context groups including children with Special Educational Needs and Free School Meals is reported when data becomes available.

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Children and Families Performance 2020/21 Quarter 1					Compared to previous data	Latest update	Current figure	Target*	Status RAG	National benchmark (quartile 1 = top)	Most recent Statistical Neighbour average
Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environmnets and have secure attachments											
% child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales.	Q1	94.9% (1074)	Better	97.0%	A		2	90.8%			
% of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for second or subsequent time	Q1	26.4% (62)	Higher (low is good)	19.1%	R		4	22.1%			
% re-referrals to childrens Social Care within 12 months	Q1	26% (312)	Higher (low is good)	19.2%	R		4	21.4%			
% Single assessments completed within 45 days	Q1	90.4% (1104)	Lower (high is good)	86.6%	A		2	83.8%			
% of Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more open at the end of the quarter (low = good)	Q1	0.3% (2)	Similar	1.7%	G		2	1.8%			
Placement stability - % children with 3 or more placements during a year (low = good)	Q1	7.3% (145)	Lower (low is good)	9.0%	G		1	10.4%			
Placement stability - % children in same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption	Q1	55.6% (127)	Lower (high is good)	71.0%	R		4	69.1%			
% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (end of quarter)	Q1	84.6% (33)	Lower (high is good)	91.0%	A		3	85.3%			
The % of Care leavers in education, employment and training (EET) (end of quarter)	Q1	61.5% (24)	Higher (high is good)	55.0%	G		1	53.2%			
The % of children in care who have had dental checks within last 12 months (at end of period)	Q1	61.7% (406)	Lower	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				
The % of children in care who have their annual health assessment within last 12 months (at end of period)	Q1	86% (566)	Similar	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				

Help children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity							
No. of individuals worked with by Children and Families Wellbeing Service during quarter	Q1	3,622	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of families worked with by Children and Families Wellbeing Service during quarter	Q1	1,323	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of Children in mainstream schools with Education and Health Care Plans	Spring Census 2020	1906	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of Children in mainstream schools in receipt of SEN Support (without EHCP)	Spring Census 2020	10375	Higher		n/a	n/a	n/a
People are safe in their daily lives							
Number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17 (low = good) (year to date)	2019/20 Q4	30	Higher (no polarity)		n/a	n/a	n/a
Rate of re-offending by young offenders (low = good)	Q3 2019/20	0.51	Better		n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of instances of the use of custody for young people (low = good)	2019/20 Q4	2	Similar		n/a	n/a	n/a

Help every child to get the best possible start in life							
% of eligible 3 and 4-year olds taking up their Free Early Education Entitlement in a high-quality provision	2019/20	93.0%	Better	96%	A	3	95.0%
Percentage of Primary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	2019/20	88.0%	Better	90%	A	3	89.0%
Percentage of Secondary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	2019/20	79.0%	Same	86%	A	2	76.0%
Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential							
The % of applicants obtaining their first preferences for 1 st time admission to primary school.	2020	92.4%	Better	93.7%	G	1	92.1%
The % of secondary pupils achieving their first preference for secondary transfer.	2020	89.3%	Similar	92.2%	G	1	89.7%
No. of Children Electively Educated at Home	Q1	735	Higher	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NEET young people aged 16-17 (low = good)	Q1	2.8%	Higher (low is good)	2.0%	A	2	2.8%

* Targets are based on being in the top quartile of County Authorities where comparative data is available
County Authorties are used as the benchmark for the LCC Annual Report

RAG rating key

Top quartile of local authorities or high in second quartile with improving trend

Second or third quartile with room for improvement

Fourth quartile or low in the third quartile with a declining trend

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