



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

Date/Time: **Tuesday, 9 March 2021 at 1.30 pm**

Location: **Via Microsoft Teams**

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

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Membership

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC (Chairman)

Dr. P. Bremner CC Mr T. Parton CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. C. Lewis Mrs. M. Wright CC
Mr. P. C. Osborne 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. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021.	(Pages 5 - 14)
2. Question Time.	
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	
6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance	



with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule
16.

7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order
36.
8. Review of the Implementation of the Corporate
Parenting Strategy 2019-22. Director of
Children and Family Services (Pages 15 - 24)
9. Children's Innovation Partnership. Director of
Children and Family Services (Pages 25 - 36)
10. Youth Justice - Overview. Director of
Children and Family Services (Pages 37 - 46)
11. Quarter 3 2020/21 Performance Report. Chief Executive
and Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 47 - 64)
12. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 1
June 2021 at 2.00pm.

13. 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, 19 January 2021.

PRESENT

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

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

In Attendance.

Mrs. D. Taylor CC – Lead Member for Children and Families
Mrs. B. Seaton CC – Cabinet Support Member.

32. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

33. 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 Sue Whiting asked the following question of the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Could the Chair please explain why reports and other publicity materials are still being published in difficult fonts when the Written Statement of Action, SEN Handbook and Local Offer newsletter are published in plain font enabling access for many more families?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The local authority has checked the County Council's website and reports and they are in a standard format and appear to be clear. The website and reports have also been checked from a mobile format and again, the format and font appear to be clear.

Supplementary Question:

Mrs Whiting asked a supplementary question in relation to clarifying which fonts were used to produce the Written Statement of Action submitted to Ofsted, the SEN Handbook, the Local Offer Newsletter sent out in December 2020 and for standard format documents.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services indicated that this information would be provided to Mrs Whiting after the meeting.

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

In relation to point 14 of the Adoption Service Annual Report, it makes clear there has been one adoption disruption within the time frame being reporting upon but there is no mention of any figures for after 3 years post adoption order. What is the number of adoptions 3 years post adoption order that have resulted in an 'adoption breakdown'. That is to say adopted children/young people have returned to care on a section 20, or moved to supported living, moved to residential schooling at least part time or moved on in another manner that results in them living elsewhere other than mainly within the family home. This would include adopted children and young people up to the age of 25 where they have SEND. Is this figure recorded? If so how many children and young people has this affected in the past year and if not, can this figure be produced please?

Mrs H Fryer CC replied as follows:

The department doesn't have the data for 2020/21 due to how the information is captured. However, for 2018/19, five children were admitted into the care of Leicestershire who were adopted and in 2019/20, nine children were admitted into the care of Leicestershire who were adopted.

Leicestershire County Council continues to support children post adoption who are placed by Leicestershire and assumes responsibility of adopted children in Leicestershire who are placed by other local authorities after 3 years, if post adoption support is required, up to the age of 18.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Bowers asked a supplementary question to confirm whether it would be possible to include the figures provided in future reports?

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Children and Family Services indicated that this would be considered.

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

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

35. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

36. Declarations of interest.

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

No declarations were made.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

38. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

39. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Children and Family Services department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. D. Taylor CC, Lead Member for Children and Family Services, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

Service Transformation

- i) The department was embarking on proposed significant transformation comprising of four main programmes – the High Needs Development Programme, Defining Children and Family Services for the Future, Children's Innovation Partnership and departmental efficiencies. These would deliver substantial cost efficiency savings and enable a sustainable, cost effective operating model whilst improving outcomes for children and young people.
- ii) It was reported that the Children's Innovation Partnership had capital investment of up to £2.5m to create up to 12 placements and a member asked for more specific clarity around what this entailed. The Director stated that the service had identified the need for some homes for children in Leicestershire and the first phase of the Children's Innovation Partnership Residential Design Brief had identified the need for an investment of up to £2.5m in order to purchase or build properties that would be used to either place young people or as assessment beds.
- iii) The department had gone into partnership with Barnardo's in 2018 and the Children's Innovation Partnership had been established for the department to work alongside a partner to improve outcomes for children. This was being developed through design briefs, the first of which was the Residential Design Brief. The majority of work undertaken to date had related to developing a number of programmes, including family group conferencing and work during the summer holidays. The Residential Design Brief focussed on improving the sufficiency of places and quality of residential provision as a result of a specific brief looking at the number of children in residential provision and how that provision could be improved. £2.5m capital had been invested to purchase a number of properties and it was projected that there would be some savings in

light of the scheme due to placement costs being lower than what was currently being paid.

- iv) The Children's Innovation Partnership Residential Design Brief was welcomed but a member commented that this was a complete turnaround from when the County Council had outsourced its children's homes. In response, the Director stated that the County Council was not looking to open and operate children's homes itself. Consideration was being given to developing a different kind of residential provision for children based on understanding their needs. Part of the strategy included continuing to work with the private sector providers to ensure that there was a wide range of provision for children. However, the County Council was also looking to develop more provision through Barnardo's as a delivery partner.

Proposed Revenue Budget

- v) The total gross proposed budget for 2021/22 was £338m with contributions from specific grants, health transfers and service user and partner contributions of £249m projected. The proposed net budget for 2021/22 totalled £89.1m. Net budget increases of £1.88m had been made during the 2020/21 financial year and had now been adjusted for in the updated original budget. This comprised of the staff pay award and fostering placement inflationary increases.

Growth

- vi) Growth over the next four years totalled £23.1m, including £10m in 2021/22. The majority of the growth requirement related to continued increases in demands (and complexities) for children's social care services culminating in increased placement costs and social workers. A member raised a query around the pattern of growth and why there was such a large increase in 2021/22 followed then by smaller growth in the ensuing three years. The Director confirmed that the amount in 2021/22 was largely due to the overspend in the current financial year. In relation to the growth for social care placements, the increased unit cost had not previously been built into the budget and was therefore not reflected adequately. The projected growth requirement had been based on what the department assumed unit costs would be and the number of children coming into care, taking into consideration the previous patterns. However, the local authority had very little control over the increased unit costs and cost of provision. Some concern was raised around this, although it was anticipated that the work being undertaken with Barnardo's would look at bringing some control over costs back in house.
- vii) In relation to G1 – Social Care Placements, costs for placements were being incurred beyond the £3m growth originally provided for, primarily as a result of an increase in the average unit cost. As a result, the Children's Social Care placement budget in 2020/21 was projecting a £2.9m overspend resulting in growth required to address the current year shortfall and to support the forecast growth for future years. In response to a query around the cause in growth in placements, it was stated that there were a number of factors, including a demographic increase and a greater number of complex cases. There had been an increase in the number of older children coming into care and a change in departmental responsibilities.

- viii) Change to case law and court directives had had an adverse impact on the current budget situation. There had been an increase in demand for parent and baby placements and increased pressure on courts to keep parents and children together. There were also other market pressures, such as the impact of Covid-19. The Defining Children and Family Services for the Future and Children's Innovation Partnership programmes included a focus on prevention, drift and ensuring the right setting first time. This included creating an Assessment and Referral Team and Hub and additional residential multi-functional capacity which would have a positive impact on placement availability and suitability, reducing the reliance on out of county placements. This was reflected in the increased savings.
- ix) Investment in additional frontline social care staff was required to ensure statutory duties continued to be met. During the current year, positive progress had been made in recruiting social workers and reducing the reliance on agency staff, although Covid-19 had impacted the scale to which this had been achieved. Growth in relation to G3 – Social care staff market premia remained unchanged, other than that it had been extended for a further year.
- x) The growth requirement for G4 – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – had been reduced. The levels of demand and costs had largely been contained within the budget for the current financial year and this had been helped by the Home Office increasing its funding rates. Increased demands were still a risk, although there were no current known factors to suggest that the previous growth was required at that level.
- xi) The School Place Planning service had been supported from the creation of a specific reserve which had now been depleted and Basic Need Funding had been decreased. Budget growth was required to continue to deliver the school accommodation programme at the same level. A review was underway to determine whether any resources could be recharged to the capital programme.
- xii) Attention was drawn to G6 – increased demand for legal costs. Over the past year, there had been a significant increase in the number of care proceedings lodged with the Court which had resulted in a forecast overspend of £0.4m in 2020/21. There were no indications that the level of demand would reduce in the near future.
- xiii) The Lead Member for Children and Family Services confirmed that the Children's Social Care review had recently been launched by Government, and this would take into consideration a number of the issues raised.

Savings

- xiv) Proposed savings totalled £3.75m in 2021/22 and £16m over the next four years in total. The High Needs Development Plan aimed to ensure sustainable services for children and young people with special educational needs within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG); to achieve this, costs reductions of £25.8m would be required over the period of the MTFs. It was also proposed that significant savings would be achieved through the

Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme, the Children's Innovation Partnership and departmental efficiency savings.

Dedicated Schools Grant/ Schools Block

- xv) For 2021/22, the DSG remained calculated in four separate blocks – Schools Block, Central School Services, High Needs and Early Years. The 2021/22 MTFS continued to set the overall Schools budget as a net nil budget at local authority level. However, in 2021/22, there was a funding gap of £5.6m on the High Needs Block which would be carried forward as an overspend.
- xvi) With regard to the Schools Block, there was a further movement towards the National Funding Formula which would fund all pupils at the same rate irrespective of the authority in which they were educated. The National Funding Formula used pupil characteristics, each with a nationally set funding rate to generate school level funding to local authorities. Funding levels between local authorities and individual schools within local authorities varied as a result of pupil characteristics rather than national funding levels. It was noted that school funding remained a 'soft' school funding formula for 2021/22 but the Department for Education had confirmed its intention to move to a 'hard' formula as soon as possible.
- xvii) The allocation of funding received for the initial revenue costs of commissioning additional school places in 2020/21 was £3.3m and this would reduce to £2.4m in 2021/22. In the medium to long term, 26 new primary and three secondary schools were expected to be built in Leicestershire. The revenue requirement for new schools was difficult to assess, although early estimates suggested that the cost could be managed within the existing grant. Expenditure was expected to rise annually from 2021/22 and to peak at £5m in 2023/24. Annual underspends in growth funding would be set aside in the DSG Earmarked Fund to meet the peak.

School Funding Formula

- xviii) It was reported that nationally, schools would receive a minimum per pupil increase in funding of 2% per pupil. Despite the overall increase in budget, there would still be 40% primary and 9% secondary schools funded at the minimum funding level and these would experience a real terms decrease in income.

High Needs

- xix) It was noted that 2021/22 was the second of a three year settlement for school funding and nationally, high needs funding had increased. Local authorities had a guaranteed minimum increase of 8% per head of population; Leicestershire had received the minimum and remained on the funding floor. The provisional High Needs DSG was £83.1m and the forecast position on the High Needs element of the DSG was presented. National research showed that high needs deficits were growing within almost all local authorities in a deficit or close to position. The Department for Education had undertaken a review of the SEND system but it was yet unknown when any findings from the review would be published.

- xx) The funding position included a transfer from the Schools Block DSG to High Needs in 2022/23 of £2m. Schools would be engaged in developing proposals for the transfer in 2021 before entering into consultation and seeking approval from the School's Forum.
- xxi) Nationally, early years funding had been increased by £66m and the grant remained determined by the number of children participating in early years education. The increase in funding equated to £0.08 per hour for two year olds and £0.06 per hour for 3 and 4 year olds. Leicestershire continued to receive the lowest rate per hour.
- xxii) In relation to the SEND review, this was seen as a positive step nationally. It was generally being seen that the number of children in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan was increasing along with the unit costs. The review was looking at the system as a whole to ensure that it met the needs of children along with the pressure on budgets. Leicestershire was advocating with the DfE that the current position and funding gap was not a sustainable position for any local authority. A number of national discussions were taking place to highlight these concerns.

Capital Programme

- xxiii) The proposed capital programme totalled £84.4m for which the majority external funding was expected. The programme continued to focus on the delivery of additional school places and additional places to be delivered to support the High Needs Development Plan. Reassurance was sought from a member that there would be sufficient S106 developer contributions to provide the required additional school places for local children, particularly in the Oadby area. The Director reported that the S106 money and the development of school places was based on a need of school places for children who reside in Leicestershire. Currently, there were sufficient places for all children who lived in Leicestershire and provision was good. There were issues in specific areas, where the ability to get a place was difficult, particularly where a family moved into the area mid term. In terms of what was built around school places, this could only be based on the number of children projected would move into an area where there were S106 developments.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 25 January 2021.

40. Update on the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future Programme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided details of the outcome of the diagnostic assessment undertaken across Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care services, along with an outline of the next steps of the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme plan and the approach to be taken. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Opportunities had been identified in the diagnostic assessment and were categorised into four main themes. The opportunities demonstrated a combination of potential benefits including cost/demand avoidance, enhancing quality and outcomes for service users and improved productivity. The total net annually recurring benefits were estimated to be in the region of £9.3m, with a stretch ambition of £13.1m over the next four years.

Also attending the meeting for this item were Mr Luke Tregidgo and Mr Stephen Knight from Newton Europe who provided further detail of the scope of the work being taken forward. Key principles of the programme were co-ownership and co-design, a robust process for tracking and monitoring improvements and performance and aiming for consistency around practice.

A joint team of frontline staff and practitioners from the Children and Family Services department and colleagues from the Transformation Unit and Newton Europe had now been established to oversee the development and testing of new ways of working. The team was entering a pilot phase to test the changes and it was anticipated that this would last three – six months. Once solutions had been developed, these would be rolled out county wide and this implementation and sustainability stage would last between six – twelve months. It was expected that the programme would run to November 2021, by which point the department would be able to independently sustain the new ways of working.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) Assurance was sought that the targets being set were achievable and that the changes would deliver permanent benefits. The Director of Children and Family Services stated that the department had chosen to work with Newton Europe as its model was to work alongside a local authority. Thus far, the level of engagement with staff had been very positive. Newton Europe had previously worked with a large number of local authorities, particularly Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care departments, and the Local Government Association had also chosen Newton Europe to work with a range of local authorities in relation to their spending. It was noted that defining success was not just about the delivery of results; key was ensuring that the right joint team was in place and that the handover was successful. As the department became more confident, support from Newton Europe would reduce and ways of working would continue to be monitored to ensure that they were sustained. In relation to the targets set, these were primarily financial and had been set around the MTFS. The Delivery Board would undertake regular scrutiny of the benefits to ensure that they were being achieved and sustained. Regular updates would also be provided to the Committee on the benefits being achieved.
- ii) The contingent fee model of Newton Europe was raised; this proposed that they would guarantee to deliver savings with fees being commensurate to the benefits delivered. It was confirmed that there was a set fee and contingency arrangements were in place. Newton Europe guaranteed to deliver an annual benefit of £7m but it was hoped that this would be as much as £9.3m. The fee to Newton Europe would be capped and if the savings fell below £7m, additional resource would be put in place to remedy this, at a cost to Newton Europe. Assurance was given that the risk to Leicestershire County Council was minimal at every stage and that it would be possible for the authority to terminate the contract at every stage.

- iii) A query was raised around whether the work being undertaken would satisfy Ofsted that its inspection recommendations had been achieved. It was reported that the Continuous Improvement Action Plan and the Defining Children and Family Services for the Future programme were closely aligned. Although the department had undertaken lots of work to make improvements, there was an acknowledgement that more needed to be done and by working with Newton Europe, there would be greater challenge to ensure that the department realised its ambitions.
- iv) Clarification was sought around the development of the pilot areas. It was reported that there were three main project themes; these had multiple workstreams to focus on specific areas. The Pathways project would focus on processes and how different systems worked together; this included intervention effectiveness and reducing the amount of time children spent in care. The placements project had multiple workstreams which would consider whether the department was using its own resources as well as it could, the fostering recruitment process and reducing the amount of time children spent in residential care. The independence project would work with children and families in the disabled service to ensure that they were ready for independence at an earlier stage.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That further progress updates be provided to the Committee.

41. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided a progress update on work taking place across the SEND local area in response to the national, regional and local increase in demand for Education Health and Care Plan Needs Assessments and the Leicestershire Local Area SEND Inspection which had taken place in February 2020. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that between 24 November 2017 and 15 July 2020, eight complaints had been taken up by the Local Government Ombudsman on behalf of parents and of these, seven had been upheld. A member raised concern and questioned how this could be avoided in future. The Director commented that changes to process and practice had been made to ensure that the issues raised in the complaints did not reoccur. Customer satisfaction surveys had also been introduced at each step of the process to ensure that any issues were dealt with. A briefing note would be produced to highlight the work undertaken and this would be circulated to members of the Committee.
- ii) As part of the Local Area SEND Inspection Written Statement of Action (WSOA), regular monitoring updates would take place with the Department for Education. A meeting had taken place recently and very good feedback had been received on the overall progress made. 31% of the actions in the WSOA

had now been completed and 49% of those outstanding were showing good progress. In terms of completing all the actions, there had been some delay to Covid-19 but it would usually be expected that these would be achieved approximately 18 months after the inspection had taken place. At the next visit, it was anticipated that the majority of the actions would be completed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

42. Covid-19 Recovery Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided an update of the work of the department during the Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

A member raised the point that some impact on children were still unknown and it was hoped that the department would be able to respond to these effects when they became more apparent. Assurance was given that the department had a continued response and focus on delivering services. The impact of the pandemic on children was still not fully known but the Director was confident that the department and its partners would continue to deliver services to children.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

43. Annual Report of the Adoption Service 2019-20.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which presented the Annual Report of the Adoption Service. This evaluated the extent to which the County Council had fulfilled its responsibilities to children for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Lots of practical work had been highlighted in the report and it was queried how much of this was still ongoing in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Director stated that next year's Annual Report would provide greater detail on the work that was currently being undertaken. Lots of activity had had to be conducted virtually, although where it had been considered safe to do so, face to face contact had continued to be offered.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

44. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 9 March 2021 at 2.00pm.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

9TH MARCH 2021

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY – 2019- 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of how the Corporate Parenting Strategy – 2019- 2022 has been implemented since the strategy was launched in 2019 and the impact it has achieved thus far.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework for the role of every Local Authority and their relevant partners (as defined in section 10 of the Children Act 2004) in the application of the corporate parenting principles, as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Local Authority must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their duties and responsibilities in relation to looked-after children and care leavers (relevant children and former relevant children). It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
3. Local authorities in England need to have regard to the 2013 Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services in relation to the appointment of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the designation of the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS). This guidance describes how those roles set the tone for the local authority to be an effective corporate parent.
4. The Corporate Parenting Strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny on 5th November 2019.
5. The Strategy has been in place since 17th December 2019. There is to be an official launch of the young person's version in April 2021. A video has been designed by members of the Children in Care Council and is now in final production stages. Unfortunately, due to the impact of COVID19 restrictions, this made the development of the video more difficult, due to the logistics of getting voice recordings and meeting with young people. The draft version was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board on 19th January 2021, where positive feedback was received.
6. When the young person's version is launched in April 2021 the main strategy will be relaunched. A meeting with Communications is arranged for the 5th March to plan the launch both internally and across partner agencies, circulation using social media platforms with young people and shared across Children's Services so that all practitioners are aware of their roles and responsibilities in delivering key objectives.

Background

7. Leicestershire County Council is currently the corporate parent to 694 children and 194 Care Leavers (as at 21/01/21). As a corporate parent, the County Council has a collective responsibility to be a good parent to children and young people in its care and is expected to do what any responsible parent would do for their children.
8. Leicestershire has a strong corporate parenting ethos which recognises that the care provided for children is not just about keeping them safe. It recognises the importance of stability for children and the Permanence Policy sets out the commitment to children in the care of the County Council and the ambition to secure emotional attachment, physical stability and long-term commitment to children. It also aims to ensure that all children in care receive access to appropriate, high quality and stable education, thus affording them with positive educational experiences.
9. When a child comes into care, the local authority becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the local authority, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by Leicestershire County Council.
10. There are seven corporate parenting principles introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which comprise of seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers. The seven corporate principles are:
 - a. To act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
 - b. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
 - c. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
 - d. 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.
 - e. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
 - f. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
 - g. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
11. The corporate parenting principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers and for the local authority to facilitate, as far as possible, secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for looked after children and young people and enable positive outcomes for them.
12. These seven principles are embedded in Our Promise to children in care and care leavers, which has been signed up to by the Leicestershire County Council, Elected Members and a range of partner agencies and launched in April 2019. These promises include:
 - a. We will support you
 - b. We will respect your identity
 - c. We will listen to you
 - d. We will believe in you
 - e. We will support you to find a place you can call home
 - f. We will inform you
 - g. We will be a lifelong champion

Update on the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the impact achieved to date

13. The Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines the responsibilities of Leicestershire County Council as a corporate parent to its children in care and care leavers. The Strategy outlines

the key principles and expectations that provide the framework for a cohesive and effective corporate parenting response. In addition to being a driver for Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable ambitious goals and success for its children, it also provides a structure for accountability and opportunity for challenge by children, the Corporate Parenting Board and member champions.

COVID 19

14. Within three months of the Strategy being approved, the service faced the difficult challenges presented as a result of COVID19. During the pandemic, the priority has been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children, families and workers. Ensuring the children whom the service is Corporate Parents to continue to receive a high-quality service, have their needs met and are supported to reach their full potential, whilst working with the challenges presented due to COVID19 restrictions.
15. During the COVID period the service has ensured services have continued to meet the needs of children and young people. This has required flexible working, being creative with the use of technology to ensure contact was maintained as well as managing Government guidance and restrictions. The service has continued to meet with children and young people virtually as well as face to face where possible, ensuring they have the support and guidance needed. For care leavers, particularly those who live on their own, the service has ensured they are offered more regular contact and when there have been particularly challenges the service has ensured it can provide supportive accommodation, for example, during this time. The service has provided support through financing mental health support and counselling for children in care and care leavers where they don't meet the threshold of CAMHS or adult services. The service has ensured all its children and young people have the digital support they need to enable them to home school/college when appropriate. Looked after children have been able to continue to attend school as vulnerable groups. The service has also ensured that children have been able to continue to see their families where it is safe to do so and if this has not been possible face to face, virtual contacts have been facilitated.

Children in Care Service

16. The children in care service has developed Our Promise across the service. All young people received a copy of the leaflet which outlined the Promise to them and this will be added to the information given to young people as they come into care.
17. Partner agencies have attended meetings and mapping events to review the support they give both children in care and care leavers. For example, the districts have enabled children to receive support with leisure passes and also information regarding opportunities for out of school/college activities. An annual report on the impact of the Promise on children in care and care leavers will be prepared by the end of August 2021.
18. Over the last year COVID has presented the largest challenge to the services provided and at the forefront is the impact of this on children and young people. The service has ensured, for example, that when young people need stronger support or carers need further support to manage challenging situations, this is provided.
19. One of the challenges services have faced is the ability to ensure children and young people see their families. The position remains that all contacts are face to face when this is safe to do so. All children and young people have COVID risk assessments which outline the agreements in place for that family. Where children are very young and therefore are unable to socially distance this can mean the service is more creative around contact, for example virtual story telling or games.
20. With the older young people, staff have continued to develop and maintain contact and support and when young people find the COVID restrictions a challenge the workers will address this with them. The providers and carers commissioned over the COVID period

have worked with the service to help with those young people who have struggled to pay due regard to the rules and guidance.

21. For Unaccompanied young people, a resource has been identified which can allow the quarantine for 14 days of young people coming into the service. Leicestershire has also this year accepted three young people from another authority to give them long term stability and support.
22. The service has continued to grow in terms of not only children needing support but staff within the different areas. The department has agreed extra capacity to ensure the children and young people have the right support at the right time.
23. In terms of stability for children and young people, the service has worked with other teams to develop processes which allows it to find the right placement for the right child at the right time. Sustainability and suitability are key. Children feeling emotionally and physically safe means the service has developed its permanency process and has agreed permanency for children and young people more often. This doesn't mean that some children will never go home but it gives children the safety they need to feel like they won't just be moved.
24. Positively, writing to the child has been introduced over the last twelve months. This has meant workers, carers, managers, senior managers are recording to the child. The notes and reports are more focused, less full of jargon and give a clearer sense of the journey of the child. The impact of this is young people understand the reports and when a young person comes back to access their records in the future they get a better sense of themselves and their childhoods.

Fostering Service

25. The fostering service ensures its foster carers work to the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Fostering and they advocate for young people. It ensures that accommodation and bedroom space is appropriate and provides training to carers via CAMHS and individual consultations to ensure young people have their mental wellbeing promoted.
26. In foster carers reviews, the service actively seeks both the views of fostered children and birth children. Staff consult with children individually to ensure their views regarding their living arrangements are sought. The service engages in participation activities throughout the year and during Covid 19 restrictions the service helped young people to express themselves through art, ran a talent show and regularly held events on its closed Facebook page to allow the young people to express themselves.
27. End of placement interviews for young people are undertaken by the service where they have moved on from a foster parent to recognize themes, concerns, and good practice that can be shared across the service. Consultation events are held for both fostered and birth children to recognize improvement activities. An Independent Visitors Scheme is operated to allow children and young people the opportunity to have time away from carers/ workers to enjoy activities without the pressure of feeling that they are being "Social worked", allowing free flowing conversation, engagement in "normal activities" with a safe adult.
28. The service supports its foster carers to be aware of all engagement opportunities and ensure young people gain access; this is monitored through supervision visits, un-announced visits, reviews and voice and choice work undertaken with foster children. The SSW spend time with all looked after children in placement building a relationship so when visits take place, they feel confident to raise any concerns.
29. Carers support young people to attend engagement activities and the service supports young people to remain in Staying Put arrangements to allow them to meet their aspirations with the support of carers who know and support this. The service has developed its supported lodgings scheme to also support young people to remain in education / training.

30. The service supports and promotes Staying Put and increased its Supported Lodgings Providers scheme to ensure young people have access to family-based care post 16.
31. The service has supported all its carers to attend training opportunities to ensure they are aware of the educational / health opportunities.
32. Stability meetings are held where there is a risk of breakdown and there is a specialist team that works with carers to support placement stability and step down from residential care to family-based care.
33. All foster carers, Staying Put and Supported Lodgings Providers work to help the young people develop their independence skills and they can work towards an ASDAN award in independence. Staff ensure that within foster carer reviews, plans for young people are discussed so carers and young people are clear what the plan is. The Staying Put Scheme is currently being revised.

Leaving Care Service

34. The care leavers team has developed the work with the fostering service, as well as the Staying Put and Supported Lodgings Service. The team is engaging with the districts in terms of social housing as well as using the private rental market when appropriate.
35. The team and the service ensure all young people have a clear pathway plan which identifies their needs going forward. Young people are encouraged to complete the ASDAN award which looks at the skills and knowledge they have and how this can be accredited to enable it to be an award.
36. The high-risk Care Leavers Panel has continued to provide robust oversight and a multi-agency response to their needs. The meeting is attended by agencies such as the Police, Health, Districts and the Bridge. Due to the success of this panel there has been a Children in Care Panel to review the high-risk children in care. The two panels allow agencies to discuss cases where there are multi agency worries to see who else may be best placed to support the child or young person, particularly when the child or young person doesn't want to fully engage with their social workers or Personal Advisors.

Member Champions

37. In 2020, following a Scrutiny Review Panel, the Leader of the Council agreed to the establishment of three Elected Member Champions. Individual panels were established to focus on Health, Housing and Education. These are multi agency and for each panel a Member is assigned to take a lead role in progressing actions and engaging with external partners to advocate on the behalf of care leavers. This has given an elevation to the panels which has meant that there has been progression across the districts in different areas.
38. A young person also attends each panel to represent the views of young people. He has been enabled, for example, to share what he felt would have helped him when he got his own place, what it feels like to be lonely or what it feels like when you don't know where to go when something goes wrong. This has meant that members of the panel who have not experienced this situation and have good levels of support can appreciate, for example, what it's like to close the door at night and have no one. Panel members have been able to ask questions and get the right answers and it has also meant that agencies, such as the Bridge (which is a charity), have been able to support young people in tenancies with a first-hand experience of the young person's voice.
39. There have been early indicators of the positive impact that the three panels are having to effect change and communication across partners. The Health Panel, for example, has had a definitive role in developing an offer across the districts which includes linking in with local opportunities to get active, Leisure Offers which are in partnership with Everyone Active, and opportunities to train as coaches, cycle leaders, walk leaders, run leaders etc. The

Housing Panel has supported with effective communication to ensure that there is a joint approach to housing issues. Care Leavers are central to the discussions and decisions from all of the panels and the focus is having a positive impact on their outcomes.

Corporate Parenting Team

40. During the Covid-19 lockdown from March 2020, a key priority of the workers within the Corporate Parenting Team, including the Children's Rights Officers and Participation Officers, was to make contact with all children and young people either in residential placement and 16+ accommodation. This was primarily to check on their well-being, ensure they were receiving the support they needed and offer any additional support around advocacy. With each contact the worker completed a short questionnaire on the young person's experiences since lockdown, how they felt they had been coping, the support they had received or needed. This information was then recorded on the child/ young person's file with any significant issues raised with their social worker.
41. Staff within the Children in Care Service ensured that all children and young people had regular contact and video calls were used to ensure good working relationships were maintained and children had an opportunity to share their views.
42. Statutory duties have been maintained and Covid risk assessments were completed to ensure all the children's needs were recognised and being met.
43. Feedback from the young people was that they were receiving a good level of support from social care, often reporting having a greater frequency of contact with their social worker or Personal Advisor than before lockdown.
44. Some young people did take up the offer of advocacy, for example to support in arranging contact with their family or to ensure they were getting the correct allowances.
45. One Participation Officer led on Leicestershire's contribution to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland 'Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Conversation for Young People June 2020'. This was developed following on from the Barnardo's 'Big Barnardo's Conversation' campaign in May 2020 to highlight the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people across the UK. This is a detailed report which highlights a number of positives children and young people experience during lockdown as well as the significant amount of challenges, most notably practical issues such as accessing dentists and other services and the impact of feelings of isolation and increased concerns about mental health.
46. The Children in Care Council was initially paused at the start of lockdown but has taken place each month since July 2020 with the exception of the usual summer break in August. All the meetings have been virtual and the feedback from young people on these meetings has been very positive; they have been well attended with an average of fifteen or more children and young people present at each meeting.
47. Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) was also initially paused and then moved to virtual meetings. The care leavers valued the opportunity to 'meet' with other young people. SYPAC had its first face to face meeting just before Christmas, 15 young people attended and enjoyed the activities and quiz and all being in a room together (albeit socially distanced). The Children in Care Council and SYPAC intend to move to face to face meetings more frequently as restrictions allow and all safety measures will be taken.
48. Choir has continued to meet throughout the lockdown period, although it has not been possible to arrange for everyone to sing together. They have been meeting virtually each week for quizzes and other activities to keep the cohesion of the group together in the hope they can all meet up and sing together again in the near future.
49. The Corporate Parenting Board has continued to meet throughout the year virtually. This has continued to be well represented by partner agencies, and children and young people members have continued to attend and take a lead role in these meetings.

50. Participation Officers arranged a Leicestershire's Got Talent event whereby any looked after young person could submit a three minute video to showcase their talents. Participation Officers also arranged an interactive online art class for half term in October 2020, where each participant received paints, a canvas and easel and were given an online lesson on how to paint a lion. Again, this was another great event with everyone who took part producing brilliant pictures which will be shared on the next Corporate Parenting Newsletter. The Fostering Service arranged a Christmas Card competition and there had been five entries; these were sent to carers, children and young people.

Youth Justice Team

51. In December 2020, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board agreed to re-brand the Service based around the guiding principles of child-first and trauma informed practice. The Board agreed to replace negative terms, such as youth offending, in favour of an asset-based approach around inclusion and youth justice. The YOS is now formally the Youth Justice Team and embedded in a wider Youth and Justice Service and continues to be governed by the now Youth and Justice Management Board.
52. The Service has made a commitment to children to put them first in all that it does (child first, offender second), to support and listen to them, to advocate on their behalf ensuring that all children are given fair opportunities and that discrimination is tackled and inclusion is promoted. Underpinning this is a fundamental commitment to build positive relationships with children, only introducing new workers when there is a defensible decision to do this and training practitioners in new systems and frameworks to support this, such as youth workers being trained to undertake youth justice assessments.
53. The Youth and Justice Service continues to ensure that robust measures are in place to ensure that Looked After Children are not over-represented in the youth justice cohort and works with partners to divert children away from the Criminal Justice System where possible through the adhering to the ten point checklist for dealing with concerning behaviour in Children's Homes when the Police are called and by using supportive outcomes at the Out of Court Disposal Panel and through the health related Liaison and Diversion scheme.

Education

54. The Leicestershire Virtual School (VS) delivers well-received specialist training about attachment and trauma (A&T) and practical strategies which can be used to support children exhibiting behaviours related to their prior trauma and attachment needs. In the 2019-20 academic year, a severely curtailed training programme (due to Covid-19) saw the VS deliver A&T training to 426 school staff.
55. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) concerns are addressed at individual Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings where children's voice is gathered, either in written form or by the child's attendance, to plan appropriate individual interventions. In the 2019-20 academic year, 70% of a total of over 1,200 PEPs had pupil views either in written form or delivered in person. New online methods of gathering voice are being trialled (surveys) to ensure maximum uptake of opportunity for children to express their views. Other means of gathering voice will be considered, including audio and video recordings once a platform is available to record and store them securely. Feedback is always gathered after participation events to inform future planning.
56. VS promotes and signposts relevant support services for children, monitoring closely education processes such as school admissions and EHCP, in the expectation of timely and high-quality support and interventions.
57. The pandemic lockdown has adversely affected the organisation of VS aspirational, educational participation activities, some of which have moved online, but others have unfortunately had to be cancelled.

58. Covid has also impacted on the availability of County Council apprenticeships and other work opportunities for care leavers. Working from home and new pay arrangements for County Council apprentices (paid at grade of post) have led to fewer apprenticeships arising and when they do, being taken up by people already in post within the County Council. Independent Living ASDAN courses remain available and some completed folders are filtering through.

Health

59. The Looked after Children's Nursing service provided by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT), in line with national guidance '*NHS Covid 19 Prioritisation of Community Services*', has continued to maintain a service to the most vulnerable cohort of children/young people in Leicestershire throughout the pandemic.
60. Although the national pandemic has considerably challenged us, the health and welfare of looked after children (LAC) has remained a key priority and alternative solutions have been applied to the provision of Review Health Assessments (RHAs) in order to continue meeting the needs of LAC. The virtual telehealth platform has worked effectively for the service, where it has been able to reach previously hard to reach young people. However, the risk imposed by the pandemic to children, young people and carers was carefully balanced against the health needs of LAC and a robust risk assessment was applied to all caseloads, which enabled the service to identify the most vulnerable children and young people, i.e. those at risk of CSE/going missing, UASC, complex needs, poor engagement with the service. All RHA requests are assessed and triaged on an individual basis with regard to the need to offer either a face to face contact or telephone/video contact. This is supported by a robust risk criteria framework as identified above and the LAC nurse's individual professional judgement.
61. LPT has also worked closely with local authority partners to ensure that all LAC who have an EHCP/and or SEND are able to continue accessing support to meet their essential health needs during the Covid-19 response.

Summary

62. Covid-19 has brought real challenges to the workforce; however it is evident that what has remained the key priority is ensuring that children and young people remain safe, have their needs met, including access to education, regular contact with people who are important to them (albeit this may at times have been via virtual means), ensuring their health needs remain met, that they have regular contact with their Social Worker and/or Personal Advisor, as well as ensuring their voice remains heard and an active part of decision making.
63. The service has worked hard to ensure that its children and young people have been prioritised, that it continues to fulfil its roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents to a high standard, delivering the promise to its children in care, whilst also providing opportunities for young people to share their views, engage in different activities and continue to have fun and support.

Next Steps

64. The young person's version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy will be launched in April 2021.
65. To continue to ensure that the service meets the roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parentings, managing the changing requirements relating to COVID19, whilst ensuring children are well supported and their needs met.
66. To look at reintroducing more direct contact with children and young people, as restrictions and safety measures allow.

67. To continue to measure success against the five outcomes identified within the Strategy:

Outcome 1 Improved Physical Health	Outcome 2 Improved Mental Health	Outcome 3 Placement stability and safe homes	Outcome 4 Attainment	Outcome 5 Care leavers
<p>Children will:</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p> <p>Be registered with a GP</p> <p>Be registered with a dentist</p> <p>Be up to date with all their immunisations</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p>	<p>Children will:</p> <p>Be supported through evidence-based interventions to maximise their emotional and mental well being</p> <p>Have improved Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire results.</p> <p>Be referred to specialise mental health services and receive treatment in a timely manner where appropriate</p> <p>Benefit from joined up multi agency working to drive relationship-based approaches</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within 20 miles of their home address</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within long term, in house provision</p> <p>Ensure children have improved placement stability</p> <p>Our discharge planning will secure improved outcomes for care leavers</p> <p>Make timely decisions regarding permanence and the use of SGO's and Child Arrangement Order to be used where appropriate</p>	<p>Children will:</p> <p>Be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <p>Have a Personal education plan which will be aspirational and ambitious</p> <p>Have their progress at school monitored and every child will receive tailored support from a specialist advisor</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Support care leavers to find safe, stable and suitable places to live, making sure they are as well prepared as they can be</p> <p>Will give opportunities to keep in touch with them until they are 25 and have high aspirations for them</p> <p>Support care leavers to remain with their long-term foster families after they have left the care of Leicestershire if that is in the best interests of the young person</p> <p>Support care leavers to become independent adults by helping to secure high quality education, training or employment opportunities</p>
Best possible outcome for our children				

Consultation

68. Children in Care and care leavers took part in consultation sessions on 16 and 30 October 2019. All children's safeguarding partners shared their views. These were all considered and included within the final document.
69. Children in Care Council members have been involved in the production of the children's version of the Strategy. This was shared at the Corporate Parenting Board where positive feedback was received.

Background Papers

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>
- Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271429/directors_of_child_services_-_stat_guidance.pdf
- Children Act 1989: care planning placement and case review
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf
- Children Act 1989: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf

Appendices

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

9TH MARCH 2021

CHILDREN'S INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP (CIP)

**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's Innovation Partnership (CIP).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Local Authorities are responsible for the most vulnerable children living within its borders. There is a duty of 'sufficiency' that requires Local Authorities and partners to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care are available locally or that there is a plan in place to move towards that position. This duty is carried out in accordance with the Children Act 1989. Leicestershire also aims to provide the right service at the right time (including placement/care), as set out in the Care Placement Strategy 2018-2021.
3. The CIP and related projects do not require a change to a Plan/Strategy within the Policy Framework.

Background

4. In 2017 Leicestershire County Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out that the authority needed to save £54m by 2020/21, £3.7m of which needed to be achieved within children's social care. Alongside this, the number of looked after children (LAC) in Leicestershire was set to grow which was projected to result in an estimated cost increase of £14.7m in 2021/22.
5. Poor market sufficiency and an inflexible market approach combined with excess demand for beds led to a seller's market. As a result, nationally it was becoming increasingly difficult for local authorities to influence the market.

6. It was identified that in order to develop whole-system change, the expertise of an external partner was needed to work alongside the Children and Family Services Department. The challenge was to develop a contractual model that complied with procurement regulations whilst providing the flexibility to respond to changing needs and opportunities. A two-tier model was conceived, comprising a collaboration agreement as a framework for governance and the design process, alongside the provision of options for the delivery or co-delivery of services by the partner or other providers.
7. In December 2018, Barnardo's was awarded the Children's Innovation Partnership contract for up to a ten-year term, renewed on an annual basis. A Children's Innovation Partnership Board (CIP) was established, including senior leaders from both organisations and the Lead Member for Children and Family services, to provide governance and challenge.
8. The key objectives of the CIP were to co-design services by sharing expertise and knowledge in the delivery of innovative solutions, contribute to transformational change through new and shared service delivery models, to co-deliver services that are focused on outcomes and value for money, to co-invest in providing additional resources and to review and develop new ways of working, and to develop the system leadership and collaboration between different organisations necessary to drive innovative systems change.
9. The CIP has been in operation since December 2018 and was recently approved to continue into Year 3.
10. Key to the success of the partnership to date has been the direct focus on delivery of outcomes and bringing about improvements to services. The golden thread has been the sharing of expertise between the two organisations and other partners, and throughout the approach has been centred around being flexible, responsive, and there has been a strong emphasis on a learning culture.
11. Relationships have been key in establishing and maintaining the partnership and its momentum. Building these genuine relationships have allowed the partnership to develop as successfully as it has done. Relationships at all levels have also been strengthened through the CIP Board, which has been an effective group with excellent representation and commitment from colleagues across both organisations.
12. Achievements to date include the commitment to working together with a shared vision, shared values, understanding of requirements, and a focus on outcomes. The partnership has enabled Leicestershire to benefit from a number of achievements which would not have occurred without the partnership; almost £2m has been achieved through bids for funding to deliver new services to children and families including:
 - a) The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme in 2019.
 - b) A pilot project delivering Family Group Conferences
 - c) A project delivering the Advanced Life Skills programme in Leicestershire schools

- d) The co-production with Leicestershire County Council of a new model of residential care which includes developing residential provision in Leicestershire for Leicestershire children. This includes the acquisition of a number of properties to be developed to meet the needs of certain groups of children and young people:
- i) Property 1: Acquired in December 2020 to deliver residential care for children up to 16 years of age
 - ii) Property 2: Acquired in December 2020 to deliver residential care for children over 16 years of age
 - iii) Property 3: Commencement of development in January 2021 of a third property to deliver Family (parent-child) residential care
 - iv) Property 4: Authorisation of plans to develop an assessment residential care unit
 - v) Creation of an assessment and therapeutic team (Assessment and Resource Team) which went live in December 2020
13. The Partnership also received external recognition through articles in national publications and achieving highly commended in the Innovation category at the GO Awards. Detailed descriptions of these projects can be found in Appendix 1.
14. Financial implications of the new model for residential care (Projected Savings) are as follows:
- a. Property 1: Residential care for children up to 16 years of age
 The overall cost of the new scheme is expected to be £431k, comprising up to £365k for the purchase of the property, £11k fees and approximately £55k for estimated redecoration and modifications including the installation of a sprinkler system. The works required will be significantly less if a domestic mist system can be used as an alternative.

 Revenue savings for the property are projected to be £82k per annum for three placements, achieved through a reduction of commissioned placement costs and the associated reduced social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Quality Assurance time and expenses of not having to travel out of county. The difference in the Barnardo's providing the care costs compared to the current average costs for these young people is £183 per person per week. Costs have been included in the assessment for property running and maintenance costs. No capital appreciation has been factored in but a retained asset has been assumed available for re-sale at the current market value £365k if no longer required.

 Based on these prudent assumptions, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below for each property with a payback of five years.
 - b. Property 2: Residential care for children over 16 years of age
 The overall cost of the new scheme is expected to be £437k, comprising up to £385k for the purchase of the property, £12k fees

and approximately £40k for fire regulatory works. The works required will be significantly less if a domestic mist system can be used as an alternative.

Revenue savings for the property are projected to be £188k per annum for three 16+ placements, achieved through a reduction of commissioned placement costs and the associated reduced social worker, IRO and QA time and expenses of not having to travel out of county.

The 16+ cohort of young people often have the most challenging needs and therefore the higher cost placements, averaging £5,117 per week per person for the current cohort and £5,985 per week per person for those children about to turn 16 next year. The equivalent costs of providing this property and Barnardo's providing the care is expected to save £136k per annum (based on weekly savings per person of £1,164 and assuming 75% occupancy) and £52k for the avoided travel time and expenses. Running costs and property maintenance have been included in the costing.

No capital appreciation has been factored in but a retained asset has been assumed available for re-sale at the current market value £385k if no longer required.

Based on these prudent assumptions, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below with a payback within 2.5 years.

c. Property 3: Family (parent-child) residential care

The capital budget requirement to develop this property is £549k including major refurbishment costs, contingency and fees. This includes an additional 10% contingency for any additional issues which may need to be resolved, and 4.5% for annual inflation.

The internal asset transfer value of the currently owned County Council property is £320k making the total investment cost £869k. The retained value of the asset will be in the region of £600k which could create a future capital receipt if the service is no longer required, reducing the net investment to £369k.

The annual net revenue savings are £247k pa as calculated below, achieving a payback within two years. The service and running costs are estimated at £296k per annum based on estimated property running costs, maintenance and the service provision expected from Barnardo's (on a block contract basis) who have provided the care estimates. This compares to the £543k costs of continuing to commission this on a do-nothing basis, including the alternative cost of commissioning the equivalent service, which is £480k, with additional savings from reduced social worker and independent reviewing officer time and travel expenses having this provision locally compared to out of county placements, which are in the

majority currently. The estimated savings for staff and expense savings is another £63k per annum.

This creates the annual total revenue saving of £247k pa and with capital asset appreciation, achieves an overall payback within two years (four years based on the gross investment).

d. Property 4: Assessment residential care unit

The cost of providing this service, including the property costs, is expected to be in the region of £1.1m based on the detailed resource costs provided by Barnardo's. Based on key assumptions made, the proposed financial evaluation can be summarised below with a payback within five years. The County Council will also still retain the land and newly created buildings for alternative uses or re-sale at a later date.

15. To support the work, current CIP secondments have been agreed to extend until 30 November 2021. By the end of 2021 two of the residential homes will be fully functional and the Family Residential Centre and Assessment Unit/Hub will be functional by mid-2022. Going forward, the focus will be on implementation/delivery of the residential model, impact (outcomes for children and savings) and future opportunities.

Background Papers

16. None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

17. None

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List of Appendices

18. Appendix 1: Detailed descriptions of projects

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

19. CIP and the related projects are considered a positive adjustment and will bring greater benefit to children and their families, specifically enable children with very complex needs to be cared for within their communities or close to their communities, with continuity of services such as remaining in their school, college and continuing with services for example through CAMHS or local health provision.

Appendix 1 - Detailed Descriptions of the Projects

Holiday Activities & Food Programme

Background

In 2018 the government announced a programme of work to explore how best to ensure more children from disadvantaged families benefit from enrichment activities and healthy meals during the school holidays. In December of that year the Department for Education (DfE) invited organisations to bid for grant funding to take on the role of co-ordination of free holiday provision for children eligible for free school meals during the summer holidays.

How did the opportunity begin?

As part of the CIP, in early 2019 Barnardo's successfully submitted a grant application to the DfE for £798,000 to deliver local co-ordination of free holiday activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children during the 2019 summer holidays. Barnardo's took a partnership approach to this grant opportunity and developed a network of Improvement Partners:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL)
- Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport (LRS)

The Improvement Partners then offered, via the Shire Grants portal, an opportunity for local providers to bid for local grants to deliver HAF to local children. The eligibility criteria for the grant was to provide services to those children who were eligible for free school meals.

This was an amazing opportunity to 'reach' a significant number of Leicestershire's children and families. The aim was for children (and, where appropriate, their parents) who attended this provision to:

- have access to and eat healthy food over the summer holidays
- be more active over the summer holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character, wellbeing and other skills
- access safe provision
- access activities aimed at reducing social isolation
- be more engaged with school and other local services and to have greater knowledge and awareness of local free holiday provision

How did the partnership shape the journey?

As Barnardo's were in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, Barnardo's supported with the development of the funding bid as they have more experience as an organisation of submitting bids. This was of great benefit and is the reason that the funding was achieved, as the timescales for this bid submission and mobilisation were incredibly tight. This was not helped by the fact that Leicestershire schools begin their summer holidays around two weeks prior to the majority of schools in the country, so this meant that the team had an even shorter amount of time to prepare.

Once the money had been secured, Barnardo's made the decision that they did not want to deliver the programme themselves as this was not felt to be in

the spirit of the CIP. Instead, they chose to bring together a number of partners and provide grants to local organisations that ran, or wanted to run, holiday clubs. A partnership was developed between Barnardo's and LRS, and it was agreed that LRS would take on project management of the programme with Barnardo's taking responsibility for the grant management of the programme.

The CIP provided the context for this true partnership to be achieved. The Leicestershire HAF was one of the only areas delivering in the country who had never delivered the project before; delivery could not have been achieved without the support, dedication and commitment of all those involved.

How did it feel?

An Impact Report was developed on the programme, which demonstrates the reach of the programme across Leicestershire. Some of the highlights were:

Suppliers offered 1904 places, equating to providing 30,464 meal opportunities and 121,856 hours of activity opportunities. There is a recognition that not all of these opportunities were taken up, and there has been some learning to share with the DfE.

Engagement with 2023 individuals who are eligible for free school meals, with many of the programmes also opening up to more children and young people who were not eligible for free school meals, as they had secured additional funding or offered paid places.

Improvement workshops were offered to support suppliers including Physical Activity and Nutrition. 95% of attendees rated the content of the workshops as good and very good.

Quality assurance visits were carried out during the programme to ensure that all providers were delivering against the minimum operating standards. All sessions were observed as having a friendly and welcoming environment with approachable and enthusiastic staff. General feedback was that everyone seemed happy and included; it was great to see the children sitting together and chatting at lunch; they were all engaged with multiple activities and had fun. New friendships were developed and the mix of ages improved social skills across different age groups.

It was important to partners that children's voice and opinions were captured, so 403 children were asked during the quality assurance visits if they were enjoying the holiday programme. 82% said that they felt happy, with 11% unsure and 6% unhappy.

Family Group Conferencing

Background

In May 2019, the Department for Education (DfE) announced their Supporting Families: investing in practice programme which was looking to work with up to 40 local authorities to test two projects from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, one of which was Family Group Conferencing (FGC). The overall programme budget for this was up to £15m. The initiative was

developed to compliment the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme by supporting families to work with practitioners and, where safe to do so, keep children from entering care through the implementation of targeted interventions. The DfE developed this programme, working with the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWC), whose role was to oversee randomised control trials to gather robust and usable evidence on their effectiveness in keeping children and parents together. Daybreak (a voluntary organisation who deliver FGCs) were also involved as a partner to help ensure effective implementation of the model.

How did the opportunity begin?

The opportunity to bid for this funding was only available to local authorities. As Leicestershire was in the CIP with Barnardo's, Barnardo's provided support in the development of the bid which enabled Leicestershire to benefit from Barnardo's expertise in bid writing. The bid was developed and submitted in June 2019, and Leicestershire received confirmation that it had been successful in July, with the successful local authorities formally announced in August 2019.

Leicestershire County Council was awarded £234,600 for 18 months, based on 204 referrals with 50% being offered an FGC on a random control basis. This random control trial is in place for each of the projects nationally and allows for evaluation to take place through tracking outcomes for children and families who both are and are not offered the opportunity for an FGC. This will result in an overall evaluation report, which can be used alongside Leicestershire and Barnardo's internal evaluation to ensure effective demonstration of impact.

Northamptonshire County Council also bid for funding for this project and were successful but were unable to source a delivery partner. They approached Leicestershire County Council and Barnardo's to see whether Barnardo's could deliver in Northamptonshire as well, under the terms and conditions of the CIP. This was agreed. Northamptonshire were awarded £514,212 for 18 months, based on 462 referrals with 50% being offered an FGC on the same random control trial basis.

The FGC project involves working with families at the point of pre-court proceedings. The FGC co-ordinators work with the close and extended family network of the child/sibling group to support the family to develop their own safety plan to keep the child/siblings at home.

The FGC team were ready to go live by the planned start date of 1st April, but due to the impact of Covid-19 the start date was delayed until 1st October 2020.

Youth Endowment Fund

The Youth Endowment Fund was established in 2019 with a £200m endowment from the Home Office and run by Impetus, in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business. The purpose was to allocate funding to projects across England and Wales to help prevent youth offending by intervening early to stop children getting dragged into crime. The intention was to build the evidence base to determine what works

and support improved outcomes for children and young people. There was a commitment for each project to be evaluated to build and share knowledge of the types of interventions which are most effective at preventing young people from being drawn into crime and violence.

Barnardo's supported Leicestershire County Council to develop the bid to the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), again enabling Leicestershire to benefit from the experience of Barnardo's colleagues in writing bids. The bid was submitted in July 2019 and Leicestershire County Council received notification that it had been successful in September 2019, with the successful areas formally announced in October 2019.

Leicestershire County Council was awarded £486,165 to deliver the Advanced LifeSkills programme in 6 Leicestershire secondary schools, with the aim of reducing youth violence. This amount included £100,000 for an evaluation partner, which was Sheffield Hallam University. The LifeSkills programme works with secondary school young people to grow and develop their attitudes to making healthy choices in life, including about involvement with gangs and violence; resisting peer pressure; and keeping themselves safe.

The programme offers opportunities to learn, discuss and ask questions about difficult issues. Children and young people who take part in the programme benefit from fun, useful activities to help change their attitudes, cope better and to stand up for themselves/others. They are able to try out new ways of dealing with something that is worrying them in a safe space before being confronted with the issue for real. They learn to make decisions and understand more about the consequences to every decision made.

Delivery commenced in January 2020 as planned, but due to the impact of Covid-19 and the closure of schools this delivery had to pause from March 2020. During the remainder of 2020, the LifeSkills team have remained in close contact with schools in a supporting role. The team have created LifeSkills at home resources which school staff shared with pupils whilst the schools were closed. These covered a range of topics from fun activities around communication to exercises on anxiety and managing emotions.

The team have also continued to have positive engagement with all 6 schools and have supported staff with resources for children who were anxious to return to schooling on site. They also provided toolkits on trauma informed whole school wellbeing. The team also worked with the schools to develop plans for delivery to recommence.

For more feedback from children and families, staff and partners, please follow this link to view a video:

<https://animoto.com/play/wJd6lmn0hQohN3rMheiAVA>

Residential Design Brief

Background

When the CIP was first established, the model was for the CIP to work on number of Design Briefs, which would involve specific Design Teams from across both organisations being tasked with a particular area of the

department to investigate and undertake a period of service design work to develop solutions. The first of these was the Residential Design Brief.

How did the opportunity begin?

The Residential Design Team were tasked to undertake:

- Further analysis of current residential data to understand why young people were being placed out of county, why placements were breaking down, and identify what constitutes a successful placement
- Understand themes of need and how this matches to market availability, identifying challenges in sourcing placements
- Understand local sufficiency issues, as it had been identified that there were more than enough residential homes in Leicestershire, but less than 50% of Leicestershire County Council's young people were placed in them
- Identify local gaps in provision
- Identify creative solutions to respond to those gaps

The model includes:

- **Assessment & Resource Team (ART):** to provide therapeutic support to children and young people, either to support their current placement or to support effective transition into an appropriate placement to meet their needs. The ART started delivery on 1st December 2020
- **ART Hub:** A Hub property to house the ART, as well as providing multi-purpose space for use for multi-disciplinary meetings, training, direct work etc. This is estimated to be ready in May 2022
- **Assessment Bed Unit:** a property to provide three placements, which will be short-term to allow for a period of comprehensive assessment in order to find a placement which will effectively meet the needs of the young person. This is estimated to go live in May 2022
- **Family Residential Centre:** a property to provide three parent and child placements (or one parent and child and one family placement), to allow for a period of parenting assessment. This is estimated to go live in October 2021
- **Under 16 Residential Provision:** a property to provide three placements for children and young people under the age of 16. This is estimated to go live at the end of 2021
- **16+ Residential Provision:** a property to provide three placements for children and young people aged 16 and over. This is estimated to go live at the end of 2021.

All elements of this model will be supported by the ART. The properties will be owned by Leicestershire County Council, and the ART and residential teams will be managed by Barnardo's.

As well as the design period, the partnership has been instrumental in the mobilisation of this model. Leicestershire County Council and Barnardo's colleagues have worked closely together to develop staffing structures for each element of the provision, and to recruit the ART and begin taking referrals.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH MARCH 2021

YOUTH JUSTICE – OVERVIEW

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 an overview of the Youth Justice Team, including the composition of the Team, performance against national and local indicators and a case study to illustrate the work that the Team undertake with children.

Introduction

2. In April 2019, as part of the Early Help Transformational Review, the Youth Offending Service (YOS), Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF), the Children's Centres and the Early Help Information, Support and Advice Service amalgamated to form the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS). This introduction of the CFWS has enabled services provided to children and young people to be aligned in a singular offer rather than being across two separate services, the YOS and SLF. The offer within the CFWS is called Youth and Justice and contains a continuum of support on both a prevention and statutory basis. This offer has a distinct team called the Youth Justice Team who provide the statutory intervention within the Criminal Justice Framework on behalf of the Local Authority.
3. The work of the Youth Justice Team and the wider Youth and Justice Service continues to be governed by the Youth and Justice Management Board (formally the Youth Offending Service Management Board) which is chaired by the Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Council and is attended by Senior Officers across the Partnership. The Service continues to ensure compliance with the practice standards and conditions of the Youth Justice Grant which are governed by the Youth Justice Board. The Service continues to be subject to the inspection regime from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) and is planning for inspection, having not been inspected since 2014.

Service Culture

4. As part of the implementation plan following transformation, the Service has worked at developing a set of Core Principles which underpin the work that is undertaken with children and young people, regardless of whether they are receiving a statutory or prevention intervention, in

essence, finding the common ground between the two services. The Core Principles place children at the heart of the Service and recognise them as being experts in their own lives. The Principles are a mechanism for the Service to have accountability to the children, each other and across partnerships. The Core Principles which guide the Youth and Justice Service are that the Service is:

- a. Child First in all that we do;
 - b. Committed to listening to children and their families and carers and taking action based on this;
 - c. Support children to achieve their potential and to have hope;
 - d. Committed to ensuring equality and inclusion and challenging discrimination;
 - e. Committed to building positive and trusted relationships with children.
5. The Core Principles have been adopted by the Youth and Justice Partnership Board and by the Service. The children engaged with the Services are currently working with Practitioners to identify the behaviours that they would expect from officers as professionals within this framework. They fundamentally support the premise that the Service is trauma informed and recognises children as children first and as offenders second through an asset based model focused on building learning, resilience and safety within children's lives.

Service Operating Model

6. The Youth and Justice Service is centrally based at County Hall but has a prevention offer in each District around the County, co-located with Family Workers in CFWS buildings to enable them to effectively engage in communities. The impact of Covid-19 means that the Service has been operating from homes, unless there is a requirement for an office space i.e. for health and wellbeing, to see children or to visit children.
7. The Service is managed by a Service Manager with 5 Managers and 7 Team Leaders. The Team has a variety of different practitioners who support the delivery of the model identified from paragraph 9. The Youth Justice Team has a specific staffing structure predominantly focused on the statutory response to children. However, by aligning the offer for children aged 10+ this has enabled the team to provide a relational based response focused on training practitioners to respond to the child, rather than re-allocating a new worker to the child (old Service practice). An example is where a child may have a Youth Worker for a brief intervention but then goes on to commit an offence and receives a Youth Conditional Caution. Previous practice would have forced that child to move to a new worker in a new Service, but current practice has enabled Youth Workers to be trained in the Asset Plus framework.
8. Children continue to be seen face to face following the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and Departmental guidance. The Service has adapted to

digital interaction with children where they have the technology and communication skills to engage well. This digital response has sustained good levels of staffing across the Service throughout the pandemic and has provided additional opportunity to review the model of operation post-pandemic.

9. In terms of prevention and diversionary work, there are a variety of strands to the offer which it has been possible to consolidate across the two former services and introduce new innovative practice:
 - a. **Street-based Youth Work** – The Impact Team offers evening sessions in key Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) hot-spots in Districts around the County. The Team are engaged in partnerships to identify the hot-spots and engage with children with a view to providing informal education and safety planning.
 - b. **ASB Reduction Work** – The ASB Reduction Officer works with colleagues across the Districts and with Police to identify those children most at risk of being issued with outcomes linked to ASB Legislation. This includes looking for unmet need and support, along with ensuring that outcomes are proportionate and appropriate.
 - c. **Groupwork** – There is a varied offer of groupwork across the service targeted at children and young people.
 - i. E-Pods – one-off thematic sessions focused on relevant topics such as Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Sexual Health, Online Gaming Safety.
 - ii. Respite offer for Young Carers and children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - Children can be engaged with groups for up to two years and both groups offer friendship, respite and informal learning. These groups are split in to two age groups; 10 – 14 and 15 – 18, which is focused on preparing children for young adulthood and transitions.
 - d. **Safer Returns Project (SRP)** – 2.5 FTE Youth Workers work with colleagues across the Department to provide a response to children who have gone missing and are assessed as low or medium risk by the Child Exploitation Hub. The Youth Workers will complete the statutory return interview with a child and will support with next steps including safety planning, identifying support, providing intervention and sharing information with partners.
 - e. **Project Responsive** – This is a team of five FTE Youth Workers who work across prevention and statutory frameworks to offer those children most at risk (offending, harm, exploitation) an intensive youth work intervention aimed at creating safety, completing practical tasks and building ongoing relationships with those children who are most difficult to engage. In relation to statutory work, the Team facilitates the interventions for all of those children who are most at risk of receiving a custodial

sentence and this can involve arranging activity for up to 25 hours per week.

- f. **Kick Start Your Life (KSYL)** – This is a project that is accessed by Project Responsive to identify sport and art-based activities focused around desistance from crime within their communities.
 - g. **Education Team** – The Service has two Education Co-ordinators who work directly with children and their families to ensure that children are in receipt of their statutory entitlement to education when pre-16 years old and are engaged in 16 hours of education, training and employment when post-16.
 - h. **Youth Action Project (YAP)** – This is a new initiative where all positive activity is hosted for children and young people. The YAP focuses on supporting children to realise their potential and create leadership qualities for life. Offers under the YAP include training in recruitment, engaging/facilitating recruitment panels of potential employees' statutory reparation and skills based projects.
 - i. **Youth Work One to One Intervention** – There are two offers in terms of length; standard for 12 weeks and enhanced for up to 6 months. Work is undertaken on a shared plan with children focused on areas of support that have been identified through assessment.
 - j. **Crime Prevention One to One Intervention** – This mirrors the option in paragraph e above but is targeted at the cohort of children who are most at risk of entering into the Youth Justice System with a view to divert or reduce the likelihood of this occurring.
 - k. **Restorative Justice Hub** – This is a group of practitioners who lead the work on restorative interventions such as reparation, representing the victim in statutory outcomes, face to face restorative conferencing, shuttle mediation. The Team also works with private care homes to reduce the risk of Looked After Children entering into the Criminal Justice System.
 - l. **Volunteers** – Community volunteers provide many services across the Service from interventions with children and being Community Panel members on Referral Order Panels.
 - m. **Family Work** – Access to support for parents and carers such as parenting interventions or whole family working remains available through the CFWS.
10. In relation to statutory Youth Justice, this is when a child has received a substantive outcome from the Justice System and all the above interventions are available to a child. A robust assessment of the child is undertaken called an Asset Plus which guides risk assessments, interventions and activities focused on desistance theory. The length and type of intervention will be directed by the Court or the Out of Court

Disposal Panel. The Officers will be working with children both in the community and within custodial settings.

11. In addition to this, the Youth and Justice Service has access to the following additional interventions:
 - a. **Victim contact** - Intervention offered to engage victims (child and adult) in the restorative work within Youth Justice. This includes the development of a pathway for child victims who research advises are most at risk of offending due to this.
 - b. **Appropriate Adult Services** – This is a requirement of the Service and is met through the use of volunteers and practitioners during working hours and a commissioned contract outside of this. These Services are provided to children who are in Police Stations and pending interview.
 - c. **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) Project** – This is a Project funded by NHS England focused on providing training, clinical support and interventions for children around understanding their ACE's and supporting them to develop a positive response to trauma. This Project has supported the Service to move to a trauma informed model.
 - d. **Liaison and Diversion Project** – This is an NHS England Project that the County Council is commissioned to deliver to provide a health response to children who have been in Police Custody and to assess for further support in the community. This project was due to end on 31st March 2021, but due to the overwhelming success of the project, the County Council will be awarded the commission to deliver this across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in conjunction with Leicestershire Partnership Trust. This Project has started to address the health inequalities within the children who are at most risk of offending or have offended.
12. Maintaining low numbers of First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice system is a priority for the County Council and Youth Justice in the main. This new model of delivery has enabled robustness in the offer of diversionary and prevention interventions for children. The Prevention offer detailed above in paragraph 9 is also available to children who are currently open to Social Care colleagues, including the Child Exploitation Hub Who Youth and Justice work extremely closely with.

Performance

13. The Service reports quarterly on local and national indicators to the Youth Justice Board and to the Youth and Justice Management Board. An overview of the most recent performance data is provided. Due to Covid-19, this data is based on local monitoring due to the lack of access by Central Government to the Police National Computer. The Committee is provided with the most recently available performance data which pertains to Quarter 2 2020/21 as Appendix 1 of this Report.

14. **First Time Entrants** - Overall, FTE rates for the Service have remained low and this has been a strong performance factor for a number of years. This is attributed to the strong diversionary and prevention offer available for children and young people of Leicestershire. This move is supported by the Youth Justice System and the focus of diverting children away from the Courts. Performance data pertaining to Q2 2020/21 shows that there were 16 FTEs. This is a decrease of five compared to last quarter (Q1) and a decrease of two children in comparison with quarter 2, 2019/20 (18 FTEs). Each quarter the Youth and Justice Management Board will be provided with detail around the journey of those children who have become FTE's to enable learning or targeting of the Service. Within this cohort, over half of the children were open to Services across the Department and were receiving support based on an assessment of needs.
15. **Re-offending rates** – The picture regarding rates of re-offending continues to be relatively consistent in terms of trends and continues to be a challenge to manage given the shift in offending type, the emergence of Child Criminal Exploitation and the complex nature of the children who are supported by Youth and Justice, along with colleagues from other parts of the Department, such as social care.
16. The data attached in Appendix 1 tells of 40 outcomes (13 Out of Court disposals and 27 Court disposals). The average offences committed within the first quarter tracking up to June 2020 was 0.40, which is an increase compared with the same period the previous year, which was 0.18. Within this period (April 2020 to June 2020), of the 40 children who are tracked, the re-offending relates to five children who have been responsible for committing 16 offences. However, one child is responsible for committing half of these offences (8) which illustrates the complexity and challenges faced by these children. Appropriate support plans and assessments are in place for all of these children across the Department.
17. **Use of Custody** – In relation to the use of custody in Leicestershire, this continues to be a strong area of performance with maintained low custody rates. When monitoring the use of custody by the Court this appears to be appropriate and commensurate to the seriousness of the offences presented before the Bench.

The strength of the Service is having credible alternatives to Custody such as an Intensive Referral Order or Intensive Supervision and Surveillance. There has been a spike of children who have not been known to any services who have committed serious offences and have received Custodial sentences.
18. The Ministry of Justice information in relation to the custody rate per 1,000 of the 10 to 17-year-old population in Leicestershire shows performance for July 2019 to June 2020 to be 0.07 children sentenced to custody. This is a decrease when compared to the same period last year (0.11). The use of custody performance remains ahead of the Regional (0.13) and National (0.18) performance.

19. **Remands** - During July to September 2020 there were four children remanded into custody. This is an increase of three compared to last quarter (Q1) and an increase of one in comparison with quarter 22019/20 (3). Nationally there has been an increase in remands, however the number of children remanded to custody in Leicestershire remains low. This continues to be attributed to the joint remand management strategy work with partner agencies. The Service is seeing a slow increase of the use of Remand by the Court, particularly over the last year; this is a national trend.
20. The Court Team continues to offer robust alternatives to Custody where risk is able to be managed within the Community. In terms of Quality Assurance regarding the congruence between the remand status of the child and the subsequent sentencing outcome that follows, the Service is confident that the remands are appropriate and have then translated across to custodial sentences upon sentence. The Service caseload data shows that there were three children open on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) during this quarter and a Remand to Custody has been avoided.
21. **Education, Employment and Training (EET)** - The EET performance has remained a challenge for the Service to hit the 80% local indicator. Performance for July to September 2020 was 61.5% (24 of 39), which is an increase from the previous quarter (59.4%) and a decrease when compared to the same quarter last year, which was 67.5% (27 of 40). The Service has undertaken work to understand why the EET performance is so challenging and there are a number of factors such as the frequency of re-sentencing for the re-offending cohort. As each sentencing episode counts towards the EET performance, children are often not engaged in any EET when they present in Youth Justice or are in alternative provision but not receiving their statutory requirement of hours and therefore cannot be classed as EET. At the request of the Board, the Service is currently planning a deep dive audit on 20 children across two Districts to unpick the education history of those children and identify any key themes or trends that can be shared. This is being undertaken with colleagues in education as a learning event.
22. The performance of the Service is monitored closely by the Youth and Justice Management Board who receive a quarterly report to the Board. The Service is currently working on widening the performance indicators on a local level.

Background Papers

23. None

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

24. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Performance Data; Ministry of Justice and Local Indicators based on local data

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

25. None. There are no changes recommended as part of this report.

Ministry of Justice and Local Indicators based on local data

Leicestershire Data Summary April 2020 - March 2021				
	Quarterly	Cumulative		
	Jul - Sep 20	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
		April – Mar 2020-21	April – Mar 2019-20	April – March 2018-19
First Time Entrants	-11.11% (16)	-28.85% (37)	11.00% (111)	-3.85% (100)
Of the above those young people known to YOS prior to becoming FTE	38% (6)	46% (17)	47% (52)	34% (34)
Use of Custody	6.45% (2)	3.6% (2)	4.96% (7)	2.4% (4)
Use of Remand	25.0% (4)	21.7% (5)	16.7% (6)	9.4% (3)
Education, Training and Employment	61.5%	60.6%	59.0%	64.2%
	Apr - Jun 2020	April – Mar 2020/21	April – Mar 2019/20	April – March 2018/19
Re-offending by young people	0.40	0.40	0.76	1.37

Ministry of Justice indicators based on YJB data (where supplied)

	Leicestershire	East Midlands	Average for YOTs of your choice	England	same period last year	change from same period last year
<u>Indicators</u>						
Use of custody (rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population) (Jul 19 – Jun 20)	0.07	0.13	0.23	0.18	0.11	-0.03



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
9 March 2021

QUARTER 3 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 October to December 2020 (Quarter 3).

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 3.
4. Due to the closure of schools, no school inspection data or education outcome data is available.
5. Quartile positions are added where comparative national data is available. Comparative data is not available for all indicators.

Overview

6. From 18 measures that have been reported, twelve have improved, one shows no significant change and two have declined. In addition to this, five indicators provide information only with no polarity.

7. From 14 measures that have a national benchmark, four are in the top quartile, six are in the second quartile, four are in the third quartile and none are in the fourth quartile. Quartiles are based on the more stable pre-Covid-19 period so should be treated with caution.

Children and Families Performance Benchmarking 2019/20

8. The County Council as part of its corporate performance processes carries out an annual benchmarking exercise against other County Councils and Unitary authorities. Following receipt of nationally published figures for 2019/20 the Council has been able to update its benchmarking accordingly. For the Children and Families element there are two main theme dashboards, one for Children's Social Care and one for SEND, based on a number of key supporting indicators. A copy of the two benchmarking charts are attached as Appendix B.
9. In relation to Children's Social Care the Council's performance now ranks 3rd, up from 8th in 2018/19 and reflects a continued strong performance focus and improvements through the post Ofsted Inspection Social Care Improvement Plan. The Council's expenditure is 30th up from 31st. In relation to SEND outcomes the Council ranks 4th, down slightly from 2nd the year before. The Council is ranked 11 out of 32 for spend, recognising some of the investment into new SEND provision as well as increased high demand and some of the high cost placement elements.

Helping children in Leicestershire live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments

10. Local Authority comparisons used are figures published by the government for end of year benchmarking. It should be acknowledged that nationally published figures reflect pre-Covid-19 activity.
11. The number of 'Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales' was 96.4% in quarter 3. This is higher than quarter 2 (94.6%) and Leicestershire remains in the second quartile of all local authorities by published benchmarks.
12. The percentage of 'Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time' decreased by 8% to 17.3% in quarter 3 (28 children). This raises Leicestershire from the bottom quartile to the top by previously published benchmarks.
13. The percentage of re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months was 21.1% in quarter 3 (292), a reduction of 2.9% compared to quarter 2. Leicestershire would remain in the third quartile by previously published benchmarks.
14. The percentage of 'single assessments completed within 45 days' was 90.6%. This represents 1028 assessments and is 5.7% lower than quarter 2. This would place Leicestershire in the second quartile nationally by available comparisons and well above statistical neighbour comparators.
15. Three Child Protection plans lasting two years or more were open at the end of quarter 3, representing 0.5% of cases. This is a decrease compared to quarter

2. The current figure places Leicestershire in the second quartile of local authorities and is lower than statistical neighbours using available comparators.
16. The 'percentage of children with three or more placements during the year' was 2.7% (19 children). This is very low by any standard and places Leicestershire in the top quartile nationally. The 'percentage of children in the same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption' was 65.1% (170). This is also an improvement on quarter 2 and Leicestershire would move up to the third quartile by previously published benchmarks.
17. The percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation was 95.2% at the end of quarter 3. This is 4% higher than quarter 2 and would place Leicestershire in the top quartile of local authorities using available comparisons.
18. The percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training was 65.1% at the end of quarter 3 (123 young people). This is higher than quarter 2 and Leicestershire remains in the top quartile by comparison with other local authorities.
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 37.5% (263 children). This is the lower than quarter 2. However, it should be noted that routine dental treatment was suspended during the period of the Covid-19 lockdown which accounts for the decrease. Full dental provision is still not yet in place.
21. The percentage of 'Children in Care who have had an annual health assessment' within the last 12 months was 83.3% (584). This is 1.1% higher than quarter 2. 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. During quarter 3, the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) worked with 3,744 individuals and 1,303 families across Leicestershire. This is slightly lower than quarter 2 in both cases when the figures were 3,855 and 1,303 respectively.
23. New figures on children with an EHCP and SEN Support are not yet available due to the disruption to usual school services.

People are safe in their daily lives

24. 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.
25. The Q2 2020/21 figure (latest available) for 'first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17' was 16. This is a decrease of five compared to the previously reported quarterly figure. The figures for the first-time entrants remain low compared to regional and national data.
26. The rate of re-offending per young offender for quarter 1 2020/21 (latest available) was 0.4 offences per offender. This is lower than the annual 2019/20 rate of 0.76.
27. Two young people were sentenced to custody during quarter 2 2020/21 (latest available). This figure is usually low, for example one or two.

Help every child to get the best possible start in life

Early years

28. The percentage of eligible two-year and three-year olds taking up the Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) is reported termly and latest figures include the autumn term up to 31st December 2020.
29. During the autumn term, the percentage of eligible 3 year olds taking up their FEEE place was 90.8%. The percentage of eligible 2 year olds was 71.7%, a significant rise. The figures were 91.5% and 63.9% respectively in the summer term.
30. The figures for the past two quarters were heavily affected by the Covid-19 disruption which meant that newly eligible children were unable to begin their placement and some parents preferred to keep their children at home. Vulnerable and key worker children were also given priority as capacity was frequently limited. The percentage of 2 year olds taking up a place increased during quarter 3. Eligibility for this age group is more targeted towards disadvantaged families.

Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential

31. No school inspections took place during this period. School inspections are expected to resume in Autumn 2020 to provide support for schools but will not result in a graded judgement of the school.
32. All school examinations and assessments were cancelled for the 2020 academic year. Any data subsequently published by the Department for Education will be reported.
33. The number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) was 790 at the end of quarter 3. This is higher than the reported quarter 1 figure of 718. This figure counts children whose parents have chosen to educate their child at home, rather than the local authority providing home tuition (for example, if a child cannot be in school due to medical reasons).

34. Although the long term national trend has been for a rise in children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), there has been a noticeable rise in Leicestershire over the previous quarter. This has been driven by two factors: firstly, having experienced a period of enforced home schooling, some parents have opted for EHE as a lifestyle choice and have chosen to continue this even when schools returned in September. The second factor has been ongoing health concerns which could be for the child, vulnerable parents or general safety concerns. The numbers will continue to be monitored closely.
35. Latest NEET data (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training), is for the end of December 2020 and shows a Leicestershire figure of 2.4% representing 339 young people. This is an increase of 41 young people compared to quarter 2 when the figure was 2.9%. The current figure is in line with the statistical neighbour average.

Conclusion

36. The report provides a summary of performance at the end of quarter 3 of 2020/21, covering the period October to December 2020.
37. 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

38. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Children and Family Services Department Performance Dashboard for Quarter 2, 2020/21

Appendix B – Annual corporate benchmarking dashboards

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

39. 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.



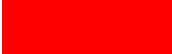
Children and Families Performance 2020/21 Quarter 3

	Latest update	Current figure	Compared to previous data	Target*	Status RAG	National benchmark (quartile 1 = top)	Most recent Statistical Neighbour average
Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments							
% child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales.	Q3	96.4%	Better	97.0%	A		2 90.3%
% of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for second or subsequent time	Q3	17.3% (28)	Lower (low is good)	19.1%	G		1 23.8%
% re-referrals to childrens Social Care within 12 months	Q3	21.1% (292)	Lower (low is good)	19.2%	A		3 22.8%
% Single assessments completed within 45 days	Q3	90.6% (1028)	Lower (high is good)	86.6%	G		2 83.8%
% of Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more open at the end of the quarter (low = good)	Q3	0.5% (3)	Lower (low is good)	1.7%	G		2 1.4%
Placement stability - % children with 3 or more placements during a year (low = good)	Q3	2.7% (19)	Lower (low is good)	9.0%	G		1 11.0%
Placement stability - % children in same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption	Q3	66.9% (170)	Higher (high is good)	71.0%	A		3 66.0%
% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (end of quarter)	Q3	95.2% (180)	Higher (high is good)	91.0%	G		1 84.7%
The % of Care leavers in education, employment and training (EET) (end of quarter)	Q3	65.1% (123)	Higher (high is good)	55.0%	G		1 52.6%
The % of children in care who have had dental checks within last 12 months (at end of period)	Q3	37.5% (263)	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)	Q3	83.3% (584)	Higher	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	Q3	3,744	Lower	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of families worked with by Children and Families Wellbeing Service during quarter	Q3	1,303	Lower	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of Children in mainstream schools with Education and Health Care Plans	Not available this quarter			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No. of Children in mainstream schools in receipt of SEN Support (without EHCP)	Not available this quarter			n/a	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)	2020/21 Q2	16	Lower (no polarity)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rate of re-offending by young offenders (low = good)	Q1 2020/21	0.4	Lower (Low is good)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of instances of the use of custody for young people (low = good)	2020/21 Q2	2	Higher	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Help every child to get the best possible start in life							
The % of eligible 2 year olds taking up their FEEE	Autumn 2020	71.7%	Higher	77.5%	A	2	75.5%
The % of eligible 3 year olds taking up their FEEE	Autumn 2020	90.8%	Similar	98%	A	3	97.1%
Percentage of Primary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	Not available this quarter					3	89.0%
Percentage of Secondary schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	Not available this quarter					2	76.0%
Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they achieve their maximum potential							
No. of Children Electively Educated at Home	Q3	790	Higher	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NEET young people aged 16-17 (low = good)	Q3	2.4% (339)	Better	2.0%	A	2	2.4%

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

* Targets are based on being in the top quartile of County Authorities where comparative data is available
County Authorities are used as the benchmark for the LCC Annual Report

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Performance by Theme

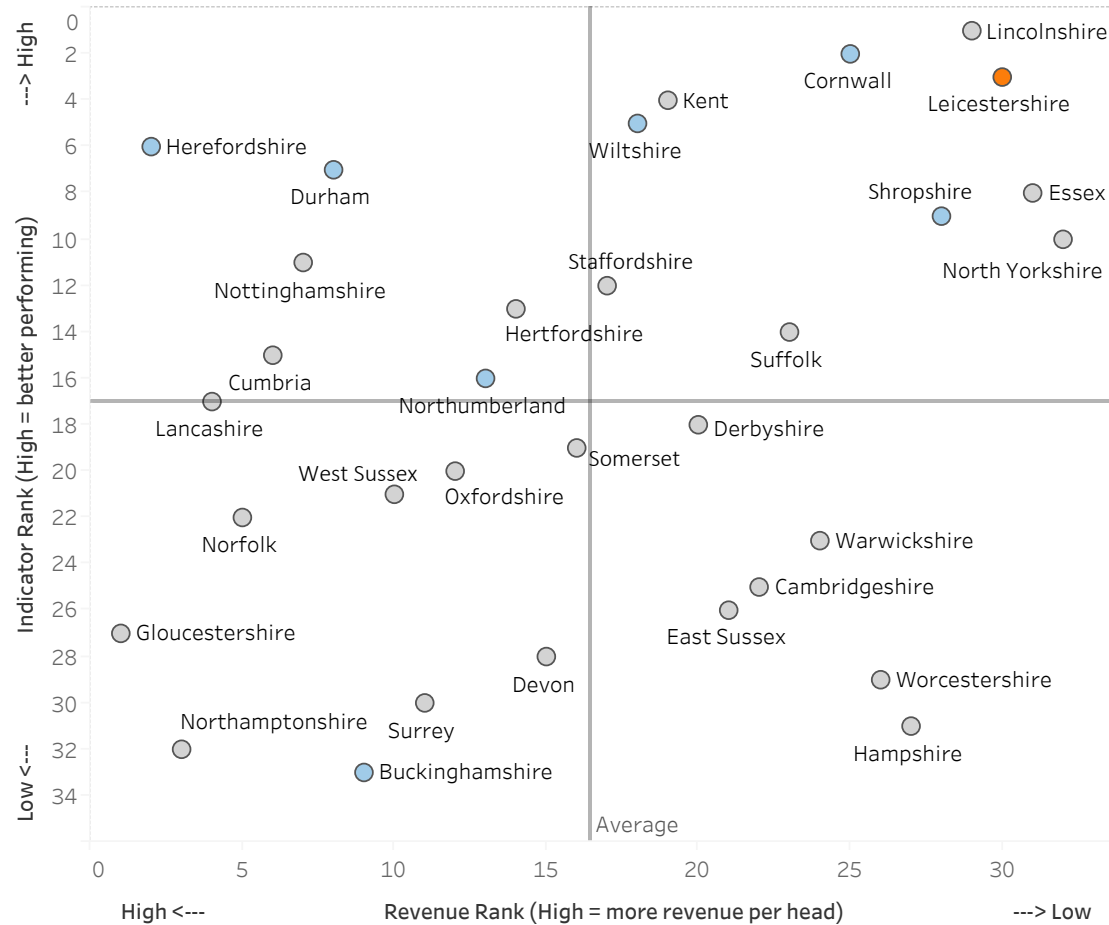
Theme
Children's Social Care

Comparator
 Revenue
 Deprivation

How to Read This Chart

The chart is divided up into quadrants based upon average rank for all indicators (vertical axis) and net revenue expenditure per head (horizontal axis) for county councils. Authorities in the top right quadrant are high performing and low spending, while authorities in the bottom left are low performing and high spending. The 'Deprivation' comparator uses local authority 2019 Multiple Deprivation rank. 'Overall Performance' is the rank of average rank for all indicators, while 'LA Core Performance' only includes themes that are related to county council functions.

Blue dots represent county unitary authorities.



Source: LAIT, ASCOF, Fingertips, various. Produced by the Business Intelligence Service, Leicestershire County Council, 2021.

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Leicestershire Indicators by County Quartiles



How to Read This Dashboard

This dashboard displays quartile information for each indicator used in the performance benchmarking calculations.

The 'quartile' column displays the authority's quartile position for each indicator. The 1st quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of the comparator group selected. The 4th quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of the Group. The data displayed is for the most recent time period.

Use the Theme filter to select all indicators under a specific theme. Use the Quartiles filter to filter indicators based on their quartile performance.

Theme 1

Children's Social Care

Quartiles

All

Theme 1	Indicator Name	Leicest..
Children's Social Care	% Children looked after who were missing	1
	% of young offenders who reoffend	1
	Care Leavers - EET (%)	1
	Care Leavers - Suitable accommodation (%)	1
	Emotional Health of Looked after Children	1
	Govt Troubled Families Prog % of families achieving continuous employment	1
	Govt Troubled Families Prog % of families achieving successful outcomes	1
	LAC Key Stage 2 - Expected Std Reading, Writing & Maths	1
	Percentage of child protection conferences held within 15 days	1
	Percentage of LAC adopted in year	1
	Percentage of social worker vacancies	1
	Placement 1 - % LAC with three or more placements	1
	% of young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody	2
	% who wait <14 mths from entering care to moving in with adoptive family	2
	Child entering care and moving in with its adoptive foster family (Time) (A10)	2
	Distance LAC placed from home	2
	First Time entrants to the Youth Justice System	2
	LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (Time)	2
	LAC Key Stage 4 - AVG Attainment 8 score	2
	Long Term Placement Stability (%)	2
Percentage of children who became the subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time	2	
Percentage of LAC having Dental Checks	2	

Source: LAIT, ASCOF, Fingertips, various, 2020. Produced by the Business Intelligence Service, Leicestershire County Council, 2021.

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Performance by Theme

Theme
SEND

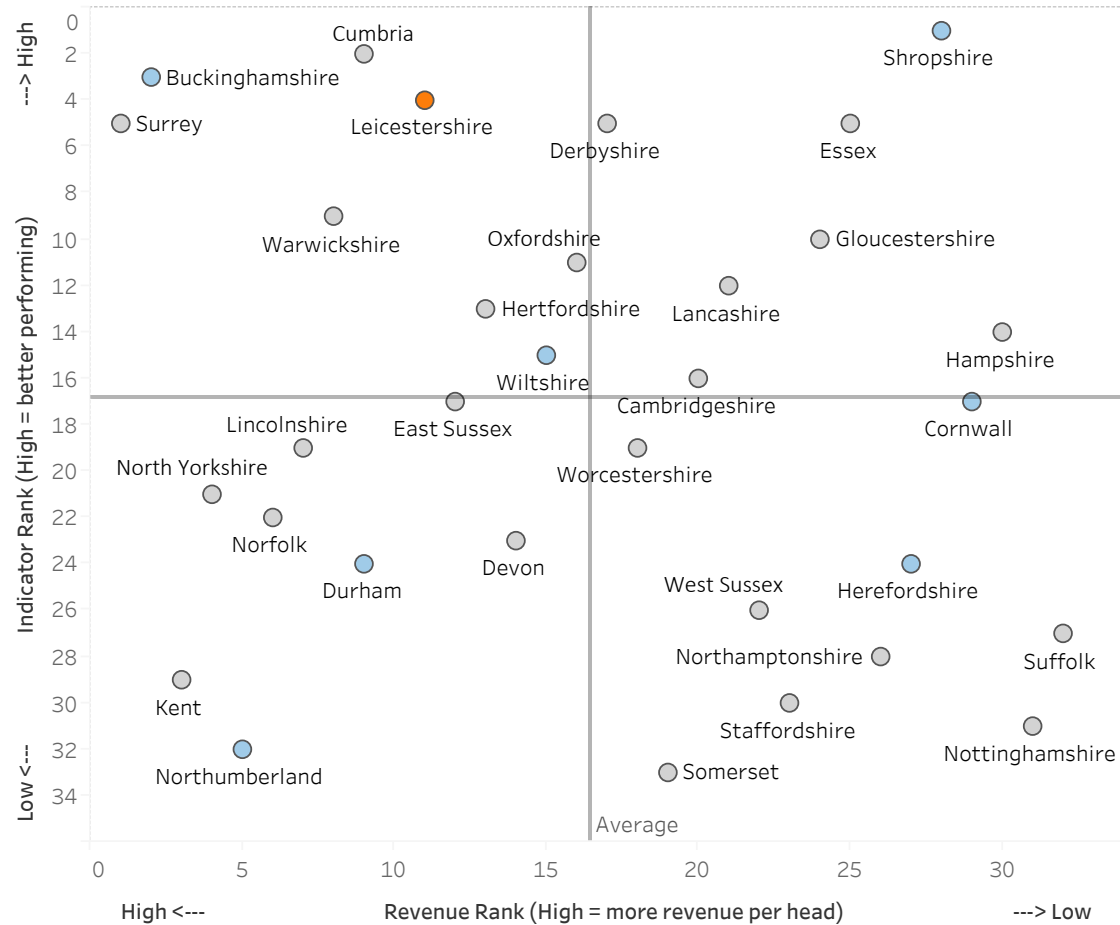
Comparator

- Revenue
- Deprivation

How to Read This Chart

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Use the Theme filter to select all indicators under a specific theme. Use the Quartiles filter to filter indicators based on their quartile performance.

Theme 1
SEND

Quartiles
All

Theme 1	Indicator Name	Leicesters..
SEND	% special schools rated good or outstanding	1
	Foundation Stage - % Good level of Development SEN with Statement/EHCP	1
	New EHC plans issued within 20 weeks - including exceptions (all)	1
	Progress scores - Key stage 2 by SEN pupils -Maths	1
	Progress scores - Key stage 2 by SEN pupils -Writing	1
	% of Pupils with Statement of (SEN) of (EHC) Plans (All Schools)	2
	%19 year olds qualified to Level 2, inc E&M - with statement/EHCP	2
	%19 year olds qualified to Level 3 - with statement/EHCP	2
	Attainment 8 score - pupils with SEN Statement/EHCP	2
	Progress scores - Key stage 2 by SEN pupils -Reading	2
	16-17 yr olds with SEN in education & training	3
	KS2 Attainment of Statemented/EHCP Children - RWM	3
	Progress 8 score - pupils with SEN Statement/EHCP	3

Source: LAIT, ASCOF, Fingertips, various, 2020. Produced by the Business Intelligence Service, Leicestershire County Council, 2021.

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