

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	CHILDREN'S RESOURCE SERVICE AUDIT AND SERVICE RESPONSE
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	6 JULY 2023
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
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#### **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Not applicable

#### **BRIEF SUMMARY**

This item covers the findings from an audit undertaken in respect of Southampton's Children's Resource Service (CRS) in February 2023. The audit was requested by the Service's Improvement Board and supported through the (regional) Southeast Sector Lead Improvement Partnership. The audit was commissioned to explore demand and practice issues in this area of the service. Audit findings were reported to the Improvement Board in March 2023 and the service responded in May 2023.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

	(i)	That the Panel consider and note the findings of the audit and the service response.
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#### **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.	The Scrutiny Panel has oversight of the service's improvement journey and the CRS audit provides context regarding the service's direction of travel.
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#### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

2.	Not applicable.
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#### **DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)**

3.	As part of the Destination 22 service redesign, local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) function now sits within the larger Children's Resource Service to ensure that families get the right support at the right time.
4.	Levels of demand (contacts and corresponding numbers of referrals) have remained high. The Service Improvement Board requested a dip-sample audit of cases, looking at reasons for contacts, referrals and decision making. The

	audit was supported through the Southeast Sector Lead Improvement Partnership, which is made up of regional network of children's services.
5.	<p>The audit team comprised of managers across Southampton and Hampshire children's services. Sixty-six audits were completed, and the following recommendations were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the contact stage for there to be a consideration of the use of the support workers to gather the information needed to aid managers with focusing on decision making. This could improve the quality and consistency of decision making and proportionate use of management expertise.</li> <li>• For staff within CRS to be offered training on the application of the threshold document and the use of the SCC's threshold document. A copy of the threshold document to be made easily and readily available to staff.</li> <li>• Children in the same household to be considered together within MASH and on allocation, to ensure all the children's needs are addressed individually and as part of their family unit.</li> <li>• To encourage strength-based practices that are child focused for consideration to be given on case notes being written to the child. This will reduce the use of language that is potentially victim blaming and jargon within children's files. Training for staff could support this.</li> <li>• Further scrutiny and follow up to be given to re-referrals by considering six monthly audits to be completed within this area by SCC.</li> </ul> <p>The audit report was presented to the Improvement Board in March 2023 and the service presented its response at Board in May 2023.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
6.	N/A
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
7.	N/A
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
8.	Children Act 1989
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
9.	N/A
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
10.	Oversight of the service improvement activity is provided by our Improvement Board and independent chair.
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
11.	The 2022-2030 Corporate Plan includes, as one of its four goals, strong foundations for life where people are able to access and maximise opportunities to truly thrive, Southampton will focus on ensuring residents of all ages and backgrounds have strong foundations for life.

	By delivering consistently good outcomes for the city's children and young people, Southampton's Children's Services and Learning Department will contribute to achieving this objective.
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<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED</b>	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Hampshire Audit Report
2.	Service Response

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1.	None
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
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**Other Background Documents**

**Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1. NA	