

Children and Families Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 25th March, 2021
at 5.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Virtual

This meeting is open to the public

Members

Councillor Taggart (Chair)
Councillor Mitchell
Councillor J Baillie
Councillor Chaloner
Councillor Guthrie
Councillor Laurent
Councillor Mintoff

Appointed Members

Nicola Brown, Primary Parent Governor
Catherine Hobbs, Roman Catholic Church
Francis Otieno, Primary Parent Governor
Claire Rogers, Secondary Parent Governor
Rob Sanders, Church of England

Contacts

Democratic Support Officer
Emily Goodwin
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PUBLIC INFORMATION

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL

Role of this Scrutiny Panel: To undertake the scrutiny of Children and Families Services in the City, including the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Early Help, Specialist & Core Service, looked after children, education and early years and youth offending services, unless they are forward plan items. In such circumstances members of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel will be invited to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting where they are discussed.

Terms Of Reference:-

Scrutiny of Children and Families Services in the City to include:

- Monitoring the implementation and challenging the progress of the Council's action plan to address the recommendations made by Ofsted following their inspection of Children's Services in Southampton and review of Southampton Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in July 2014.
- Regular scrutiny of the performance of multi-agency arrangements for the provision of early help and services to children and their families.
- Scrutiny of early years and education including the implementation of the Vision for Learning 2014 – 2024.
- Scrutiny of the development and implementation of the Youth Justice Strategy developed by the Youth Offending Board.
- Referring issues to the Chair of the LSCB and the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Public Representations

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting on any report included on the agenda in which they have a relevant interest. Any member of the public wishing to address the meeting should advise the Democratic Support Officer (DSO) whose contact details are on the front sheet of the agenda.

Access – access is available for the disabled. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

Mobile Telephones:- Please switch your mobile telephones to silent whilst in the meeting

Business to be Discussed

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

QUORUM The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3.

Use of Social Media:- The Council supports the video or audio recording of meetings open to the public, for either live or subsequent broadcast. However, if, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting. By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being recorded and to the use of those images and recordings for broadcasting and or/training purposes. The meeting may be recorded by the press or members of the public. Any person or organisation filming, recording or broadcasting any meeting of the Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them doing so. Details of the Council's Guidance on the recording of meetings is available on the Council's website.

Rules of Procedure

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Smoking policy – the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

Fire Procedure – in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take

The Southampton City Council Strategy (2016-2020) is a key document and sets out the four key outcomes that make up our vision.

- Southampton has strong and sustainable economic growth
- Children and young people get a good start in life
- People in Southampton live safe, healthy, independent lives
- Southampton is an attractive modern City, where people are proud to live and work

Dates of Meetings: Municipal Year

2020	2021
4 June	11 February
23 July	25 March
1 October	
3 December	

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" or "Other Interest" they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter that they or their spouse, partner, a person they are living with as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were a civil partner in relation to:

(i) Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(ii) Sponsorship:

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Southampton City Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expense incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

(iii) Any contract which is made between you / your spouse etc (or a body in which the you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest) and Southampton City Council under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed, and which has not been fully discharged.

(iv) Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Southampton.

(v) Any license (held alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Southampton for a month or longer.

(vi) Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) the landlord is Southampton City Council and the tenant is a body in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interests.

(vii) Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Southampton, and either:

- a) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body, or
- b) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest that exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Other Interests

A Member must regard himself or herself as having an 'Other Interest' in any membership of, or occupation of a position of general control or management in:

Any body to which they have been appointed or nominated by Southampton City Council

Any public authority or body exercising functions of a public nature

Any body directed to charitable purposes

Any body whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Council's Code of Conduct, Members to disclose any personal or pecuniary interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST

Members are invited to declare any prior participation in any decision taken by a Committee, Sub-Committee, or Panel of the Council on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

5 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING) (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 11 February 2021 and to deal with any matters arising, attached.

7 CHILD FRIENDLY CITY (Pages 5 - 10)

Report of the Executive Director - Children and Learning, informing the Panel of the Child Friendly City initiative.

8 SERVICE RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (Pages 11 - 58)

Report of the Executive Director - Children and Learning providing a service response to questions raised by the Ombudsman relating to experiences of Looked After Children.

9 PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY WITH LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

(Pages 59 - 66)

Report of the Executive Director - Children and Learning providing an overview of participatory activity being undertaken with looked after children and care leavers.

10 CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE

(Pages 67 - 90)

Report of the Service Director - Legal and Business Operation, recommending that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.

11 MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Pages 91 - 94)

Report of the Service Director - Legal and Business Operations, enabling the Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Service Director – Legal and Business Operations

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Councillors Taggart (Chair), Mitchell (Vice-Chair), Chaloner, Guthrie, Laurent and Mintoff

Apologies: Councillor J Baillie

28. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor J Baillie were noted.

29. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

30. **SOUTHAMPTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Independent Chair of the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership that provided the Panel with an update on the work of the Partnership during 2019/20.

Derek Benson, Independent Chair of Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership; Councillor Barnes-Andrews, Cabinet Member in attendance; Robert Henderson, Executive Director Wellbeing (Children and Learning), Southampton City Council; Phil Bullingham, Head of Service: Children's Social Care, Southampton City Council; and, Julian Watkins, Head of Service: Safeguarding, Southampton City Council were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the safeguarding partnership in Southampton is strong and robust and working well. Attendance at partnership meetings has been good and all agencies have remained focused on children's safeguarding throughout the pandemic. Over the last year the partnership has seen that some children have become more resilient, but there has also been an increase in cases of neglect, domestic violence and incidents of young people requiring support for their mental health.

31. **SERVICE VISION AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning which recommended that the Panel noted the progress and commented on the revised service vision and the developing Children and Young People's City Strategy.

Councillor Barnes-Andrews, Cabinet Member in attendance; and Robert Henderson, Executive Director Wellbeing (Children and Learning), Southampton City Council; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The strategy had strong vision and clear values.
- That there would be meaningful consultation on the strategy with staff and stakeholders.
- That a new partnership board, with representation from a range of partners would be established to give stakeholders the opportunity to engage in decisions about service delivery.
- That plans for locality-based working required further development.
- The Practice Framework clearly identified five essential details that would be in every child's file.
- That the implementation of five protected Continuing Professional Development days for all staff would be monitored.
- That Foster Carers are a key section of our workforce and should be included in the Workforce Academy.

RESOLVED

- (i) That at a future meeting of the Panel, analysis would be presented that identified how many children's files, from a sample of cases, include the 'Southampton 5'-things we should see on every child's file as identified in the Practice Framework.
- (ii) That the Executive Director would consider how training for foster carers would be included in the development of the Workforce Academy.
- (iii) That members of the Scrutiny Panel were invited to the 9 March 2021 workshop / seminar on becoming a Child Friendly City.

32. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning which provided an update on progress against the revised Children and Learning Improvement Plan.

Councillor Barnes-Andrews, Cabinet Member in attendance; Robert Henderson, Executive Director Wellbeing (Children and Learning), Southampton City Council; Phil Bullingham, Head of Service: Children's Social Care, Southampton City Council; and, Julian Watkins, Head of Service: Safeguarding, Southampton City Council were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The well-being of Social Workers was promoted within teams and individual support had been provided as required, which included a free counselling service for staff.
- A national directive for all authorities to take on their fair share of children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers has increased the number of Looked After Children who were Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers in Southampton.

- Analysis of referrals identified that cases had been closed too early as a family's problems came back shortly after the case had been closed, thereby requiring another referral.
- That increased use of Early Help services as a part of a step down offer would reduce the number of re-referrals. It had also been identified that more referrals could have been appropriately allocated to Early Help services instead of assessment or child protection teams.
- Additional staff who had been employed temporarily to meet the increase in demand last year have been added to the establishment and will be moved to permanent contracts.
- Investment had been made into establishing a Workforce Academy.

RESOLVED

- (iv) That the Executive Director reflected on the language used in the report when referring to service areas, practice and outcomes that required improvement.

33. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Governance which provided an overview of performance across Children and Families Services since November 2020.

Robert Henderson, Executive Director Wellbeing (Children and Learning), Southampton City Council; Phil Bullingham, Head of Service: Children's Social Care, Southampton City Council; and, Julian Watkins, Head of Service: Safeguarding, Southampton City Council were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- There had been high demand pressures for teams that supported Looked After Children.
- A Principle Social Worker had been appointed to engage the workforce in practice development, to share and promote best practice and to develop and maintain relationships with Social Workers from other authorities in the region.

34. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel noted the report of the Director, Legal and Business Operations which enabled the Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.

The Panel noted that all the requested information had been provided and utilised to inform the discussion of the agenda items.

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DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	CHILD FRIENDLY CITY
DATE OF DECISION:	25 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Children and Learning	
	Name:	Robert Henderson	Tel: 023 80 834 899
	E-mail:	robert.henderson@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Quality Assurance Unit Manager (Principal Social Worker)	
	Name:	Stuart Webb	Tel: 023 80 834 102
	E-mail:	stuart.webb@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Not applicable

BRIEF SUMMARY

<p>Southampton's vision has been to become a Child Friendly City since 2018. Southampton launched this ambition as part of its Year of the Child 2020, which although limited by the impact of the pandemic, continues to set the objectives that will help the city achieve Child Friendly status (whether self-declared or accredited). This paper sets out how the Child Friendly Vision is being developed and the Scrutiny Panel are invited to comment.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- | | | |
|--|------|---------------------------------------|
| | (i) | That progress be noted. |
| | (ii) | That a further briefing is scheduled. |

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Southampton City Council is committed to be being a Child Friendly City by 2025 and it is an ambition that we have remained committed to, despite the pandemic. More so than ever we need a clear vision for our children and families within the city as we address the key challenges of poverty, equality and climate change. |
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
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2.	Description	Pro's/Con's
	Self-Declared status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aims of the project can be achieved without the UNICEF costs. There will be no formal acknowledgement of the city's status.

	Do nothing, defer or abandon ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option has no resource implications • Resources will continue to deliver other statutory duties and BAU • Child Friendly is considered the preferred approach to improving outcomes for children by the Service and Cabinet Member.
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

3.	<p>Child Friendly Cities such as Bristol, Leeds and Hull have proven to be cities that successfully bring everyone together, extend partnerships to local businesses, the voluntary, community and faith sectors; places of learning – schools, further education and universities and of course children and families themselves. There is a strong correlation with sustainable and greener planning, social justice and culture. Southampton’s approach has been to take a lead from Child Friendly Leeds, where the programme has been running since 2011. Our Values as a Child Friendly City have thus far been promoted as being to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Inclusive – by becoming a participative city in which children experience meaningful engagement in the design, delivery and place shaping of Southampton. • Listen – by implementing a participation framework for children within Southampton City Council’s democratic processes within which consultation with children takes place. • Learn - by ensuring all strategy and policy are informed by the active engagement of children, with new strategic commitments expressed in child friendly terms that support children’s inclusion and participation in civic policy creation.
4.	<p>Several programmes of consultation and research are already planned and the city of Southampton is host to some innovative concepts such as ‘Metamorphosis’ (Play Streets), Connecting Cultures (University of Southampton including Cultural Services and Children’s Services), the Local Plan and Green City consultation and the inquiry into childhood obesity (Public Health). Southampton is connected to a range of experts who are predisposed to target their research to the city, including the University of Southampton and other Child Friendly experts already invested in activity such as Child Friendly Streets (Metamorphosis) with strong links into other European cities.</p>
5.	<p>Southampton has the potential to achieve accreditation as a Child Friendly City within five years. Accreditation would require the city to reframe local policy setting with regard to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, with particular reference to Article 12 (respect for the views of the child), thus ensuring that the rights of children are assessed as a protected characteristic. The accreditation team will help city leaders understand the implications and benefits of taking this approach.</p>
6.	<p>Several Child Friendly cities have opted to not seek accreditation but have become self-declared Child Friendly City’s such as Leeds and Hull. Others such as Bristol are active members of a European Network of Child Friendly cities.</p>

7.	However, Child Friendly Cities have been able to galvanise local action to include business investment in activity that is of benefit to children. Child Friendly status also catalyses funding bids that can bring in additional investment via charitable foundations or government funded programmes.								
8.	At present only seven local authorities have achieved UNICEF Accreditation, including Liverpool, with none in the South East and South West region of England. As a city with international aspirations there is a strong case for becoming the first city on the South Coast, aligning to the city's City of Culture bid and sustainability ambition.								
9.	Becoming an accredited Child Friendly City would commit Southampton to undertake a review of existing policy to ensure compliance with the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) Framework, principally goals 1 and 2. The CFCI Framework sets out the standards and expectation for achieving accreditation and the evidence needed to become a Child Friendly City.								
Goal 1	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="422 772 965 840">Building Blocks</th> <th data-bbox="965 772 1364 840">Core Components</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="422 840 965 1120">Children's participation: Promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes</td> <td data-bbox="965 840 1364 1120">Child rights policy and legal frameworks at municipal level</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="422 1120 965 1310">A child-friendly legal framework: Ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures that consistently promote and protect the rights of all children.</td> <td data-bbox="965 1120 1364 1310">Making child rights known and understood by adults and children</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Building Blocks	Core Components	Children's participation: Promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes	Child rights policy and legal frameworks at municipal level	A child-friendly legal framework: Ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures that consistently promote and protect the rights of all children.	Making child rights known and understood by adults and children		
Building Blocks	Core Components								
Children's participation: Promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes	Child rights policy and legal frameworks at municipal level								
A child-friendly legal framework: Ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures that consistently promote and protect the rights of all children.	Making child rights known and understood by adults and children								
Goal 2									
https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf?_ga=2.99864990.1233490428.1581959216-1323452066.1581959216									
10.	A number of service areas are supportive of plans to work towards a Child Friendly Southampton and have been expanding their participative initiatives to support children and young people; these include a number of high-level academic input from the University of Southampton (Metamorphosis) and University of Roehampton (Early Years). These are described below:								
Service Area	Participative Framework	Connected Strategies/Activity	Lead Officers						
Cultural Services	Connecting Cultures	Cultural Education Partnership, City of Culture 2025	Carolyn Abel, Head of Service, SCC Claire Whitaker, City of Culture Bid Director Louise Coysh, University of Southampton						

	Stronger Communities	Youth Council, Youth Forum, Children's Mayor Member of Youth Parliament	Participation Plan, active in sport and cultural education partnership Make Your Mark	Steve Smith, Head of Service, SCC Hayden Collins, SCC
	Children's Services	Pledge to Care, Experienced Children and Young People Inclusion Charter Restorative Charter	Bright Spots, Mind of My Own, Language that Cares Children in Care Council Chatter that Matters Working with Families Group	Phil Bullingham, Head of Service, SCC Sallie White, SCC Pippa Cook, SEND Strategic Review Manager Stuart Webb, Service Manager
	Green City and Infrastructure	Green City Youth Assembly, Play Streets	Green City Plan, Metamorphosis Green City Plan	Pete Boustred, Head of Service, SCC Neil Tuck. SCC Carolyn Ireland, SCC Alan Wong, University of Southampton
	Planning & Economic Development	City Vision consultation with children	Local Plan	Paul Barton, Head of Service, SCC Helen Owens, Engagement Specialist
11.	The benefits of further investment in accreditation are not all financial and include the following outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Better coordination of engagement resources ○ Strengthened partnership resource, inclusive of child and young people focused activity, ○ Increased business engagement with contributions of both in kind and cashable resource, albeit not necessarily secured as revenue ○ Consistent engagement with partnership activity such as CEP, public health initiatives, with schools ○ Leaner capacity to respond to and deliver short time programmes such as Euro 2021 ○ Achievement of goal one and two as part of the CFCI framework. 			
12.	The programme of activity will begin in April 2021 with the accreditation process likely to begin as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted (summer 2021).			
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS				
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>				
13.	Accreditation requires a financial investment of up to 30K per year, for five years (a total of £150k), which includes membership fees and internal budgets. The			

	<p>final amount is dependent on city population size. This investment would ensure Southampton receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 days of support from the UNICEF team – this is broken down into 20 days behind the scenes project support and 10 days per year visiting the city (annually over five years). • This includes stakeholder engagement, partnership workshops and audit of local participation processes and procedures. • Membership covers the cost of the programme, which is not profit-making. • Official accreditation from an external organisation to fully confirm our status – this is a journey which an independent board will judge whether we have been successful. • A dedicated officer to help push and liaise Southampton’s programme. <p>This budget has been agreed. An additional £5k per annum has also been agreed for publicity and events.</p>
14.	<p>Additionally, the Executive Management Team have agreed a dedicated internal resource (costing £47k per year; £237.5k total) who will act as a single point of contact. They will assist with the coordination of activity, ensure information is cascaded throughout stakeholder networks and act as a catalyst to galvanise cross sector interest (including from business) in the Child Friendly programme. This person would work directly with the Executive Director of Children’s and Learning, Senior Leadership Team and service areas supporting child friendly activities such as the Cultural Education Partnership, Participation Team and Active Transport. The Stronger Communities Service is recruiting two young people as apprentices, to support participation, who are expected to be able to engage in this area of work, ensuring young people’s perspectives are embedded within our cross-service activity.</p>
15.	<p>The total cost of the project per annum is £84.3k for 5 years.</p>
<u>Property/Other</u>	
16.	<p>None at this stage</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
17.	<p>S.111 Local Government Act 1972</p>
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
18.	<p>None</p>
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
19.	<p>The primary risks are largely reputational in terms of not progressing with an ambition that has been set as a political priority for the local authority. The risks are mitigated by the support that has been agreed by the Council’s Executive Management Team.</p>
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
20.	<p>The Corporate Plan 2020 sets out the following regarding the wellbeing of children in the city:</p>

<p>“Working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this area looks at wellbeing across the city, with a focus on adults and children’s social care, education and public health. We work closely with partners to help safeguard vulnerable people across the city. We are focused on delivering strong customer experience across the Adults and Children & Families services. We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its proactive approach to preventing problems and intervening early, as well being a ‘Child Friendly City’ where children and young people have great opportunities and an aspiration to achieve. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to lead safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.”</p>

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	None

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.	None

DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	SERVICE RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
DATE OF DECISION:	25 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Children and Learning	
	Name:	Robert Henderson	Tel: 023 8083 4899
	E-mail	robert.henderson@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Quality Assurance Unit Manager (Principal Social Worker)	
	Name:	Stuart Webb	Tel: 023 8083 4102
	E-mail	stuart.webb@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
Not applicable	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
<p>In December 2020, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) published the report, 'Careless: Helping to Improve Council Services to Children in Care'. The report, attached as Appendix 1, considers learning from complaints that the LGSCO has investigated on behalf of looked after children.</p> <p>The report outlined a number of areas that local authority scrutiny panels should explore with Children Services Departments. To aid this process, attached as Appendix 2, is a position statement developed by the service against the identified key lines of enquiry.</p>	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
(i)	That the Panel note and challenge the current service performance outlined in Appendix 2 and consider the opportunities identified for future scrutiny.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	<p>Southampton City Council has corporate parenting responsibility for looked after children in its care and care leavers. Corporate Parenting Principles have been set out by the Department for Education (2018) and are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people • to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people • to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners • to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people • for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and • to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	In the introduction to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) report, 'Careless: Helping to Improve Council Services to Children in Care', it is reported that in the last five years the LGSCO have received more than 150 complaints and enquiries a year in which they identified problems about services to children in care as the key issue. The LGSCO have regularly upheld more than two thirds of complaints they go on to investigate in detail.
4.	The LGSCO is keen to share learning from complaints with locally elected councillors who have the democratic right to scrutinise the way councils carry out their functions and hold them to account. This is particularly important for looked after children where the council is their corporate parent.
5.	Analysis of the complaints by the Ombudsman has highlighted key questions elected members could ask officers when scrutinising services for looked after children.
6.	In response to the suggested questions, a Position Statement, attached as Appendix 2, has been developed by Children's Services. The appended document outlines the current service position against the LGSCO areas of focus.
7.	Based on the service analysis three broad opportunities for further scrutiny of the issues raised have been identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be a thematic discussion regarding placement sufficiency; this could also include the use of unregulated placements and in addition cover the outstanding fostering discussion noted in the monitoring appendix. • The annual IRO annual report could be presented to Scrutiny Panel when it is completed in Autumn 2021. • There could be a focus on the mental health of looked after children, jointly with health colleagues.
8.	The Panel are recommended to consider the attached LGSCO report and scrutinise the services response outlined in the Position Statement, and the suggestions for developing awareness and insight into the issues.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	

9.	None at this stage
<u>Property/Other</u>	
10.	None at this stage
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
11.	S.111 Local Government Act 1972
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
12.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
13.	The principal risk is that looked after children and care leavers would be disadvantaged if a local authority was failing to discharge its corporate parenting duties effectively. The risk is mitigated through the local authority quality assurance process and governance via the Corporate Parenting Committee.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
14.	The Corporate Plan 2020 sets out the following regarding the wellbeing of children in the city: <p>“Working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this area looks at wellbeing across the city, with a focus on adults and children’s social care, education and public health. We work closely with partners to help safeguard vulnerable people across the city. We are focused on delivering strong customer experience across the Adults and Children & Families services. We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its proactive approach to preventing problems and intervening early, as well being a ‘Child Friendly City’ where children and young people have great opportunities and an aspiration to achieve. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to lead safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.”</p>

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman report – Careless: Helping to Improve Council Services to Children in Care
2.	Position Statement

Documents in Members’ Rooms

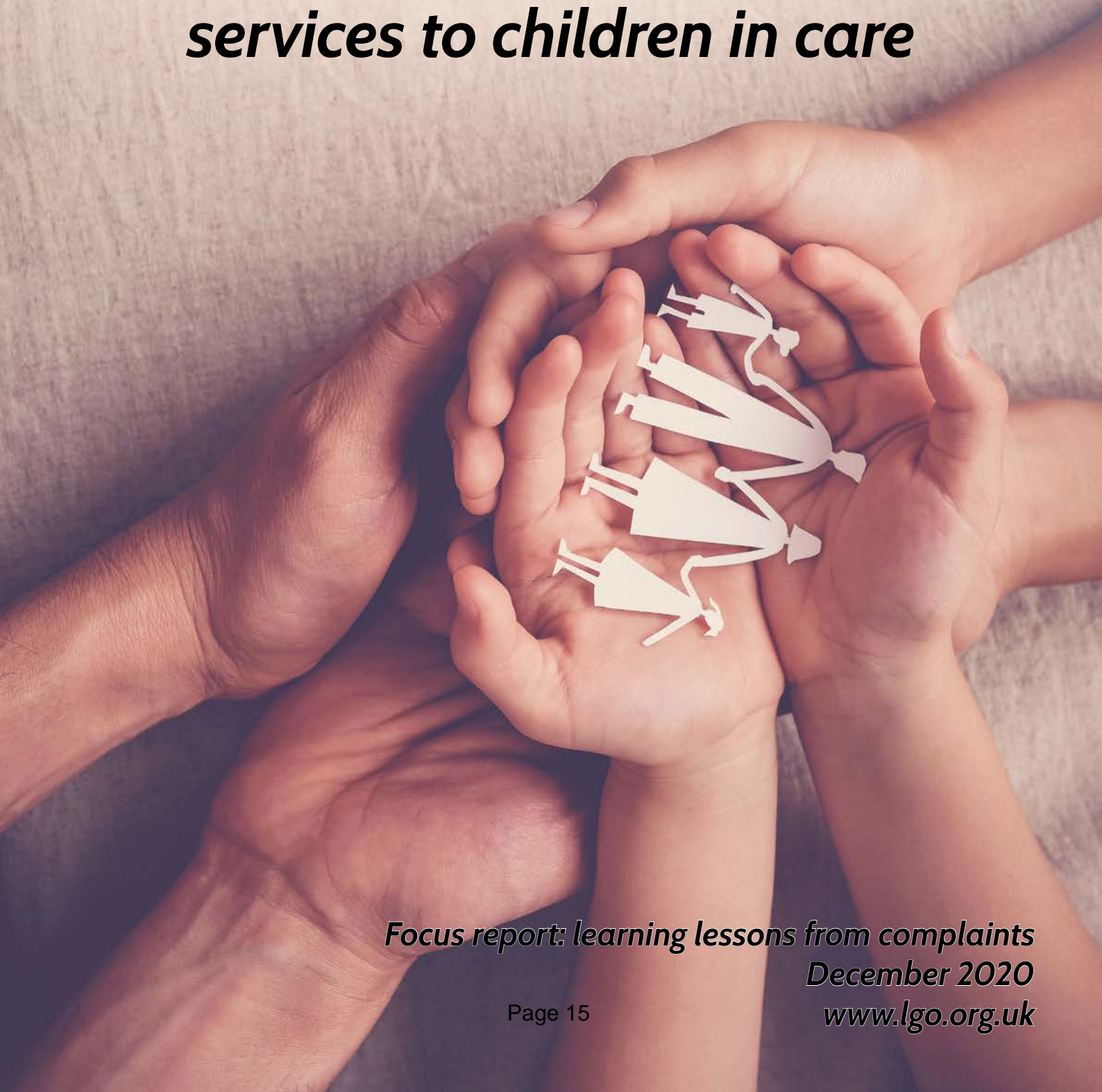
1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

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
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.	None	

Careless: ***Helping to improve council services to children in care***



*Focus report: learning lessons from complaints
December 2020
www.lgo.org.uk*

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Ombudsman's foreword



Every child deserves – and most have – a secure and stable home life. But for those children not able to live with their parents, they rely on their council to provide an environment in which they can flourish.

We have chosen to highlight our findings from complaints about the services given to children in care – despite them being a smaller proportion of our caseload – in the hope of helping to improve outcomes for a particularly vulnerable group of people.

The evidence shows that, on the whole, children in the care of their local authority have a tougher start in life than most.

They are more likely to have a special educational need (56% compared with 15% of all children¹) or a mental health difficulty². The most likely reason for coming into care is because they were at risk of trauma³ and those leaving care are less likely to be in education or employment⁴.

The number of children in care is also growing: the latest figures show a 28% increase in the last decade (up from 60,900 in 2009 to 78,150 in 2019).

For these reasons it is ever more important councils make decisions that minimise further disruption or harm to children in their care.

1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884758/CLA_Outcomes_Main_Text_2019.pdf

2. <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1622/statistics-briefing-looked-after-children.pdf>

3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/850306/Children_looked_after_in_England_2019_Text.pdf

4. For care leavers aged 19 to 21-year old, 39% were NEET (compared to around 12% of all young people aged 19 to 21 years). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/850306/Children_looked_after_in_England_2019_Text.pdf

This report uses real case studies to highlight the breadth of the investigations we undertake about children in care. We see a range of common issues, which we have set out here to broadly follow the journey a child may make through the system, from entering to leaving care.

Some of the stories are saddening. Such as the young man discovering years later that he might have been deprived of his chance to say goodbye to his dying mother. Or the young woman coming home unawares to find her bags packed and asked to leave her foster home that day.

While the councils' actions in these cases were disappointing, we want to drive home the importance to all councils of learning from mistakes. In doing so this can help avoid repetitions and therefore improve the lives and opportunities for all children in care.

For each case study, we highlight how we not only put things right for the people who complained, but how we made practical recommendations to improve services for everybody.

The successes of these service improvements rely on councils taking a proactive approach to learning. We now highlight every service improvement each council has committed to making on our [Councils Performance Map](#).

Our map is an invaluable resource for anybody interested in building a picture of how their council responds to complaints. For example, local councillors can use this to scrutinise their council's performance. We also offer some specific questions for councillors to ask at the end of this report.

I hope councils providing children's services will take on board this report and reflect on their procedures and processes. At every turn, I invite them to ask themselves, 'would this be good enough for my child?'

I hope councils providing children's services will take on board this report and reflect on their procedures and processes. At every turn, I invite them to ask themselves, as the statutory guidance alludes: 'would this be good enough for my child?'



Michael King

**Local Government and
Social Care Ombudsman**

December 2020

Complaints to the Ombudsman



In the last five years we have received more than 150 complaints and enquiries a year in which we identified problems about services to children in care as the key issue. We have regularly upheld more than two thirds of complaints we go on to investigate in detail.

The cases we do not investigate in detail include instances where the people had yet to complete the council's complaint process, or were about issues we do not have power to investigate.

In the year 2019-2020, we investigated 30 complaints in detail and upheld 67% of these. Our uphold rate for investigations across all our work was 62%.

The case studies in this report are from investigations completed before the Covid-19 outbreak.

How we put things right

Where we find a council at fault, and this has caused injustice, we will recommend how it should put things right. This might include:

- > properly considering whether a child meets the criteria to be accommodated
- > providing leaving care services or making long term plans to ensure the young person's security and stability
- > a symbolic payment to recognise lost opportunities, avoidable distress, or reimbursing money for missed support

Where our investigations identify a practice or policy fault, we recommend how councils should make changes to improve services for everyone, often through reviewing procedures and training staff.

Our service improvement recommendations for every council are mapped out on our [Your Council's Performance page](#).

We also have the power to investigate matters during an investigation where other people, who have not complained to us, may have suffered because of a systemic failure we have found. We often ask councils to identify if anyone else has been affected and provide an appropriate remedy to each of those people.

Legal context

A child who has been in the care of a council for more than 24 hours is considered a looked after child. The term 'children in care' is also commonly used.

Children in care generally live with foster parents, in a children's home, or in a residential setting like a school or secure unit. They come into care for a range of reasons, usually:

- > their parent(s) have agreed to them being placed elsewhere, often with a relative⁵
- > the council or police have taken out a protective order because they are at risk of significant harm
- > they have been abandoned or are unaccompanied, and have no adult with parental responsibility for them

Councils are normally required to seek a care order from the family court to bring a child into care. Where the plan is for adoption, councils should seek a placement order.

Under the Children Act 1989 councils have duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children they look after. These include:

- > drawing up a care plan to ensure the child's health, education, family, and social needs
- > having a long-term plan for the child's care and placing them with a relative where possible
- > making a permanent placement, where possible
- > regular reviews of the placement chaired by an independent reviewing officer
- > seeing the child regularly

The principles of good corporate parenting are set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This involves councils promoting best interests and high aspirations, securing safe and stable home lives, and taking into account the views of, children in care and those previously in care who are eligible for support.

Children stop being looked after when they are adopted, return home, or turn 18.

Councils also have a duty to support children who have left care until they are at least 21, and can be up to 25 for those in further education or training⁶. Support can include a pathway plan (which sets out the care to be received), a personal adviser, and help with expenses connected with work and education. It may involve them staying with their foster family.

Family courts can also make private orders to relatives, a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order, to secure the child's placement long term and give the carer some parental responsibility.

It is not generally in the best interests of children to move between short-term placements. Councils must plan for a permanent arrangement, wherever possible, to encourage a stable and secure environment for children to flourish.

5. A section 20 agreement under the Children Act 1989

6. The Children Act 1989, the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017

Legal context



Reviewing support

All children will have an independent reviewing officer (IRO). They are responsible for ensuring the council acts in the child's best interests and listens to their wishes to inform their care planning.

Key decisions about care are normally taken at a child's statutory review meeting, held at least every six months. These meetings include all agencies involved with the child and, if appropriate, the child should attend them.

Education

Councils also have a duty to promote the educational achievement of current, and former, children in care⁷. All children should have a Personal Education Plan incorporated into their care plan and be placed in a school within 20 days of a placement move, and they have priority on school admissions.

Complaint handling

The Children Act requires councils to set up a three stage complaints process for complaints from, or about, children in care. It consists of:

- > Stage 1 – local resolution
- > Stage 2 – an independent investigation with an independent person overseeing it
- > Stage 3 – a review panel with an independent chair

The complainant has the right to progress through all stages of the procedure. However, we do see examples where councils refuse to allow a complaint to progress through all the stages.

7. Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children; Department for Education statutory guidance; 2018.

Legal context

Case Study - complaint handling

We issued a [public interest report](#) when a council refused to consider a complaint under stage two of the statutory children's complaints process. The council said nothing could be achieved by a stage two investigation and it did not have the child's consent to do so. It is not for councils to decide what can or cannot be achieved at stage two. If someone asks for their complaint to be considered at stage two, the council must normally comply with this. The council did not need the child's consent to do this.

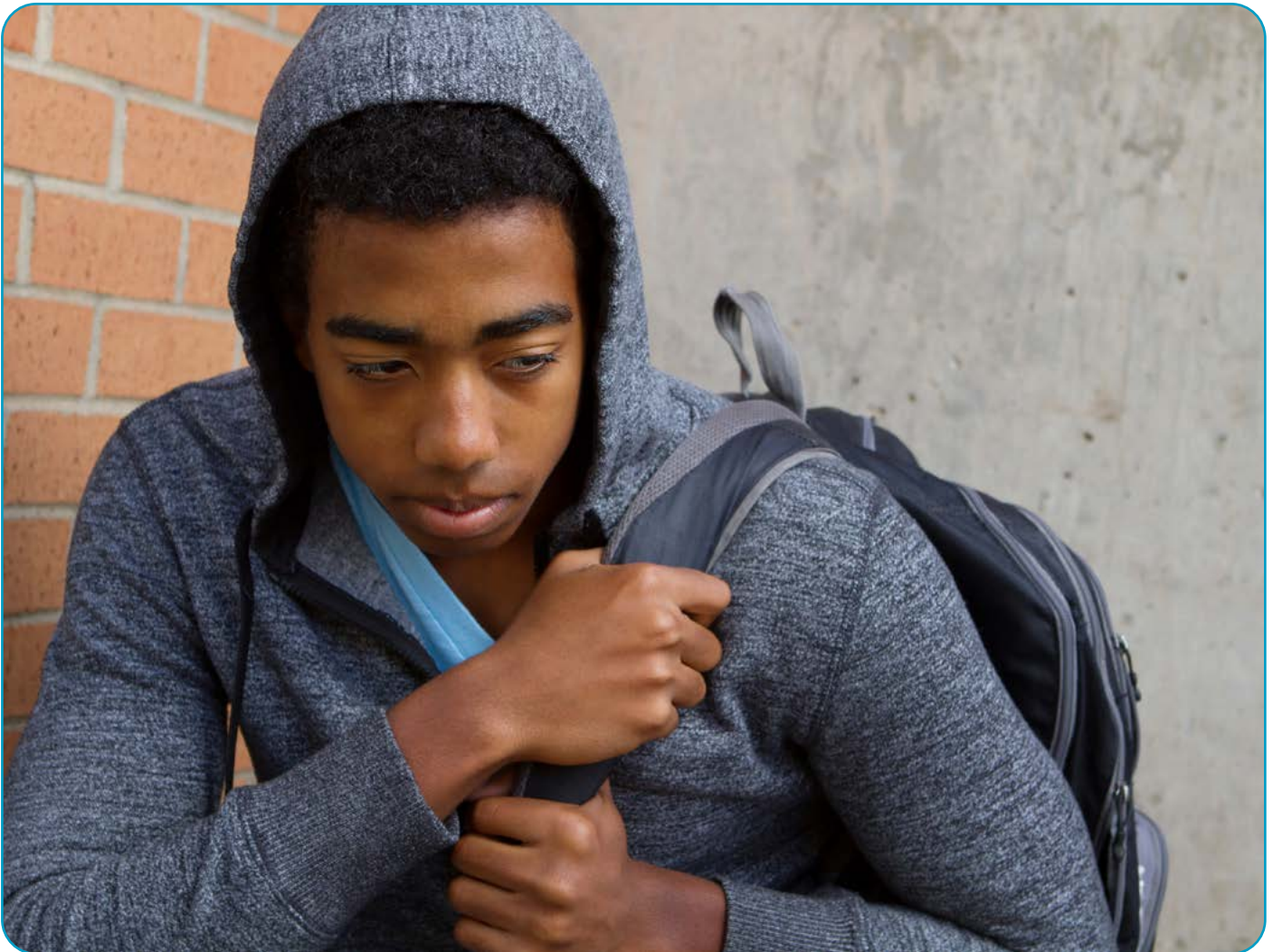
It is not for councils to decide what can or cannot be achieved at stage two. If someone asks for their complaint to be considered at stage two, the council must normally comply with this.

We provide good practice guidance for councils on applying the children's complaints process in our recently revised [Guidance on good complaint handling](#).

Councils usually do not accept complaints about something that happened more than a year after the person knew about it. However, in children's services complaints, the statutory guidance requires councils to consider exercising their discretion to look at 'out of time' complaints where it is practicable and appropriate. Young people are less likely to be fully aware of their rights and it may not be until they grow older that they realise what they experienced was wrong.

A good example of this is in the case study found later in this report, [Donna's story](#). We decided to investigate a complaint from a care leaver who came to us more than a year after she was aware of the events.

Common Issues



Coming into care

The type of ongoing support and financial assistance children, and their carers, receive is especially reliant on the decisions councils make when children first come into care.

Often relatives or family friends step in to provide stability and prevent children going into care. Our investigations have seen examples where those stepping in are given inadequate advice from their council or receive promises of financial assistance and support that do not materialise.

Cases often centre on the legal basis for the child entering care. If councils claim the arrangement was a private matter, the child is not classed as 'looked after' and the council has no duty to provide support.

On the next page we highlight a recent case study. For more detail on these issues we have published previous focus reports specifically about [Family and Friends Carers](#) and [Special Guardianship Orders](#).

Common Issues - coming into care



Sally's story

Case reference: [18 007 945](#)

Sally and her husband had helped care for their two grandchildren for some years because their daughter had a history of mental health difficulties. When their daughter was compulsorily detained under the Mental Health Act, the grandchildren went to live with Sally as an emergency placement.

Sally asked the council for help and support in caring for her grandchildren. She said she had serious concerns about her daughter's ability to care for the children in the long term. The council agreed to help but advised Sally to make a private law application in court for a child arrangement order, which would ensure the grandchildren could continue to live with them. The court granted this order.

The council then said this meant legally she was an informal carer, who had agreed with the children's mother to care for them. The council claimed it was not involved in placing the grandchildren with Sally and so it had no duty to support her or her grandchildren.

Sally complained about this. The council's own investigation found it should have intervened sooner to protect the children and it had not told Sally of the care options available to her. This prevented Sally and her husband making an informed choice.

What we found

The council did not meet its duty to accommodate the children when immediate action to protect them was required.

When the children's mother could not care for them, the council had a duty to consider placing the children with family carers. In those circumstances, Sally would have been entitled to receive a fostering allowance as a family and friends carer.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > backdate the family and friends' carer's allowance
- > support and pay for Sally's legal costs to apply for a special guardianship order
- > pay Sally £500 to remedy additional injustice caused by the fault



Service improvements for all

The council agreed to:

- > review its policy on child arrangement order allowances

Learning points

Councils should:

- > accept their responsibilities to support family carers when placing children with them because of child protection concerns
- > not rely on the goodwill of family carers and claim a child was placed as a private arrangement when the facts of the case indicate otherwise
- > have clear procedures for emergency placements under section 20 of the Children Act, when placing children with family carers who have previously provided support on an informal basis

Common Issues



Care planning

When a child comes into care, a care and placement plan must be written. Social workers must visit children in care every six weeks. Care plans must be reviewed a minimum of every six months. Independent reviewing officers must ensure decisions are in the child's best interests and there is no undue delay in meeting their needs.

If children cannot return home to their birth parents, councils must consider alternative long-term placements, first with family members. Councils should apply for a Placement Order if adoption is considered the best option. This gives the council authority to place a child with prospective adopters without parental consent.

Common Issues - care planning



Albert's story

Case reference: [18 015 593](#)

Albert was 11 and living with foster parents, when he was told his birth mother had died. Four years later, during a statutory review meeting, Albert learned his mother had been on life support, but it had been decided to switch this off.

Albert complained to the council about not being told this at the time, potentially denying him the opportunity to visit her before she died. He also complained the information was shared with him in an insensitive way.

The council upheld his complaints. It was not possible from the care records to establish why he had not been told his mother was seriously ill. The information in the care plan report also used insensitive language and was inaccurate. There was also a significant delay in dealing with his complaint.

What we found

Our investigation found the council's poor record keeping meant Albert is left never knowing whether he missed a chance to say goodbye to his mother. While we credited the council's approach to learning from the case, it should have offered more to recognise the distress it caused Albert.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > apologise to Albert and pay him a token amount for the distress caused by its poor record keeping, the way he was told of his mother's death and the delay in dealing with his complaint



Service improvements for all

The council agreed to:

- > improve how it communicates important life events with children in its care and the way it manages staff performance

Learning points

This case illustrates the importance of considering carefully how distressing information is shared, and of keeping accurate records. In particular, young children need to be able to understand years later the decisions being made by their corporate parent.

Common Issues - care planning



Marcus' story

Case reference: [19 005 254](#)

Marcus was born abroad and came to this country with his parents. He was placed in care in his early teens under a Care Order.

Marcus had no birth certificate. The council made efforts to obtain one, but both the embassy of his birth country, and the hospital in which he was born, had no record of his birth. Marcus' parents did not cooperate to help resolve this.

By the time Marcus was 16, his independent reviewing officer raised concerns he did not have the necessary identity documents to obtain a passport. The council made further attempts to get hold of them, but these were unsuccessful. It meant Marcus missed a wedding abroad with his foster family.

At 18, Marcus left care but still had no passport or identity documents. The council appointed him a personal advisor. It agreed to pay for Marcus' immigration solicitor and a weekly allowance because he had no access to benefits.

Marcus says his 'life was on hold and his pathway to independence curtailed'. He could not work, obtain benefits, housing, a provisional driving licence or further education because of the lack of appropriate identity documents.

He had three job offers but could not take them up without proof of identity. He was also very worried about his status in this country.

With the help of an advocate, Marcus complained to the council and it acknowledged it had got things wrong in planning his care. Marcus did not think the council properly recognised the impact this had on him and wanted to ensure services were improved for other children in care, so he complained to us.

What we found

As a child in its care, Marcus was reliant on the council to safeguard his welfare. Ensuring he had appropriate identity documents and a passport was fundamental to this.

We said the council should have started resolving this matter as soon as it applied for a Care Order. But seven years later, the matter remains unresolved.

We decided the council should have referred Marcus to an immigration solicitor sooner. We also said there were other options open to the council to ensure Marcus had the right documentation.

Common Issues - care planning



Marcus' story

Case reference: [19 005 254](#)



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > pay Marcus £1,000 for his avoidable distress and £600 for losing out on three job opportunities
- > continue funding Marcus' immigration solicitor until he obtains a passport. If this does not happen, he can complain again to us
- > regard Marcus as a 'new' care leaver once he obtains a passport. This includes preparing a new pathway plan, and giving him access to the usual support services he missed out on in leaving care at 18
- > ensure Marcus has appropriate accommodation

Learning points

Councils have a duty to ensure children in its care have the appropriate identification documents so that, when 18, they are able to obtain the benefits, services and other opportunities to which other 18 year olds are entitled. Obtaining immigration advice also at an early stage, if cases are complex, is essential and no child should be left trying to resolve these matters themselves.



Service improvements for all

The council was keen to learn from this complaint and had taken steps to better monitor children in its care to ensure that nobody left at 18 without appropriate documentation. So, the council agreed to:

- > test its new monitoring arrangements by reviewing all current cases of children in its care without a passport
- > ensure that, when care proceedings are initiated, and there is a likelihood of the child being placed in care, the council obtains from the parents the child's identification documents, at this stage, as a matter of routine

Common Issues



Ensuring stability

A key function of a child's care plan is to ensure there is a long-term plan for their upbringing. This is known as permanency planning, and it identifies which option is most likely to meet the needs and wishes of the child.

Councils have a duty to secure suitable accommodation within their area, as far as possible (The Children Act 1989). The definition of permanence planning was extended to incorporate where the child will live, and any harm they have suffered or are likely to suffer (The Children and Social Work Act 2017).

When considering placing a child for adoption, courts and adoption agencies must have regard to the child's relationship with the prospective adopters (where they are already placed) as well as with relatives.

Independent reviewing officers (IROs) have an important role in ensuring a council keeps to its plans for children in care and that their best interests are promoted.

Councils also have specific duties on deciding school places for children in their care. They appoint a 'virtual school head' who is responsible for promoting educational achievement for these children and working with social workers to ensure they understand the admission process as it affects each child.

Common Issues - ensuring stability



Tom and Nikki's story

Case reference: [17 003 962](#)

Tim and Nikki fostered two particularly vulnerable children when their birth parents were no longer able to look after them. Professionals reported the children made good progress and started to see Tom and Nikki as their permanent carers.

After two years, Tom and Nikki told the council they wished to adopt the children and would need continued support to help with the children's complex needs. The council agreed to assess the couple as prospective adopters and apply for a placement order, but it delayed in carrying out these actions.

The council started to have concerns about Tom and Nikki's ability to care for the children, given the substantial amount of support they were requesting. It also questioned whether the children were making an expected level of progress.

The council decided the children should be removed from Tom and Nikki's care and not to give them any notice. Social workers collected the children from school and told them Tom and Nikki had gone on holiday.

What we found

We found the council did not follow most of the required care planning procedures in this case. There was no evidence to support the council's concerns and there was no statutory review meeting. The council did not consult the independent reviewing officer on the plan to remove the children, whose role it is protect the best interests of the children.

By failing to give Tom and Nikki notice of its plan to remove the children, the couple were unable to legally challenge this decision before it happened. We decided on balance, had they been able to, Tom and Nikki would have taken legal action to prevent the children's removal. It would then have been for the courts to decide their application to adopt and decide what was in the best interests of the children.

In this case, we used our powers to also consider the injustice the children suffered. We found the children would have been harmed by the sudden removal from the home. While, happily, they were found another foster placement which became long term, the way the council acted denied them the chance to voice their own wishes on the matter.

Common Issues - ensuring stability



Tom and Nikki's story

Case reference: [17 003 962](#)



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > apologise and pay Tom and Nikki £5,000 for the distress caused and loss of the family life they had wanted
- > set aside £2,000 in a savings account, for each child when older, for their avoidable distress
- > place a copy of our report on the children's social care files so they could understand what happened when older



Service improvements for all

The council agreed to:

- > ensure independent reviewing officers are always involved in decisions to significantly change a looked after child's care plan
- > ensure social work staff hold a statutory review meeting when making significant decisions about care planning, other than in safeguarding emergencies
- > report back on its review of its foster care procedures and its training regarding record keeping

Learning points

Councils should:

- > make decisions transparently, and not seek to change care plans without proper consultation with the child, where appropriate, and those involved in the child's life
- > think particularly carefully about disrupting a foster placement, where a child has remained for some time, without carrying out a proper analysis of the risks and benefits
- > usually plan a placement move and prepare children for the move

Common Issues - ensuring stability



Adele and Manjit's story

Case reference: [18 006 028](#)

Adele is a long-term foster carer for Manjit, who was due to move to secondary school. Manjit has special educational needs and a learning disability. She has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

When the council started planning for Manjit's transfer to secondary school, Adele recommended a placement at an independent school. The council and virtual head considered a special school was more appropriate. They took this decision, having considered it was not Adele's preference and that Ofsted had said it required improvement. Guidance says councils should try to choose 'good' or 'outstanding' schools.

Adele attended a planning meeting and argued the special school could not meet Manjit's needs. Officers said she could not appeal the decision to name the school because the council had accepted the place.

Adele said Manjit's wishes had not been considered and should be respected by involving an advocate. She also said that there was another school more suitable.

When Adele complained to the council, it said it could not get a place for Manjit at the alternative school or change her EHC plan. It would not appeal the final EHC plan to the Tribunal because it considered the special school was appropriate.

Adele then complained to us and pursued an appeal to the Tribunal.

What we found

We found there had been unnecessary delay in making plans for Manjit's secondary school transfer. Manjit was anxious about changing schools and this caused further additional anxiety and uncertainty.

The council took few steps to involve Manjit in the choice of school and, although it subsequently agreed to appoint an advocate for her, this was too late as the school choice had been made.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to pay Manjit and Adele a token amount for the failures we identified.



Service improvements for all

The council reviewed its delegation procedures so that those involved are clear about respective responsibilities in this area.

Learning points

- > councils should ensure its children in care are consulted on school changes and, where there are difficulties in communication, appoint an advocate
- > while it is ultimately the council's responsibility to take key decisions for children in care, it is important the views of foster carers are taken into account

Common Issues



Contact arrangements

Section 34 of the Children Act gives councils a duty to provide birth parents, and other relevant people, reasonable contact with children in care.

When courts make a Care or Placement Order, they may specify the level of contact the child should have, but often it is left to the council's discretion. When decided by the council, contact arrangements are considered at the statutory

review meeting. A contact plan is produced which takes into account the child's wishes and considers their best interests.

Parents can apply for a contact order if they are dissatisfied with the level of contact a council is allowing under section 34 of the Children Act. Siblings taken into care, but not placed together, often wish to have continued contact.

Common Issues - contact arrangements



Mayte and Blanca's story

Case reference: [18 015 286](#)

Daniel is a young boy looked after in long-term foster care. The council held a care order for him.

Daniel's mother, Mayte, and grandmother, Blanca, complained the council did not arrange and support contact with him properly. They said the council did not give them input into decisions about Daniel or take their views into account.

The council's own investigation upheld some of their complaints, including the council cancelling or rearranging contact at short notice. On one occasion, contact should have taken place on Mayte's birthday, but did not.

What we found

Our investigation acknowledged the council accepted fault for not sending Mayte minutes of statutory review meetings. It also failed to convey Mayte and Blanca's views at those meetings. The council also communicated with them poorly.

We also decided that, because there was a difference of opinion between the family and the council regarding Daniel's wellbeing, he would benefit from having an advocate. The council appointed one.

Mayte separately decided to take legal proceedings to secure the contact arrangements she thought appropriate.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > explain why it intended not to involve Mayte in the statutory review meeting
- > review Mayte and Blanca's contact arrangements through the review process



Service improvements for all

The council agreed to properly share information between different meetings, when those take place outside of the statutory review meetings, when parents are not allowed to attend.

Learning points

Care plans must properly consider contact with relatives, in a timely way, recording the frequency of contact and where it should take place.

Common Issues



Accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds

Children aged 16 or 17 can provide their own consent to being accommodated and do not need a parent's agreement. When children of this age approach councils for help finding somewhere to live, a common issue we see is councils failing to properly consider whether they should provide accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Case law and Government guidance has restated the legal position that a council's duty under section 20 of the Children Act towards

young people aged 16 or 17 who require accommodation, takes precedence over its duties under the Housing Act. (Statutory guidance - Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation 2010).

Councils also have a 'sufficiency' duty to secure enough appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of the children in their care, which is located in their local authority area.

Common Issues - accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds



Billy's story

Case reference: [17 005 652](#)

Billy was 17 when he was thrown out of accommodation he had been sharing with his father and had nowhere to go. Neither of his parents was able to provide him with accommodation. Billy was known to his local children's services department to be vulnerable, with identified difficulties with drug use, previous contact with mental health services and known criminal behaviour.

The council offered Billy somewhere to live but it was a long way from where he ordinarily lived and so Billy refused this. Rather than consider whether it should accommodate Billy nearer, the council gave him a tent.

Billy changed his mind about coming into care, but the council was unwilling to accommodate him due to his challenging behaviour. At one point they gave him a new tent when the first one broke and later placed him in a static caravan. After around two months the council placed Billy in supported accommodation.

Billy's mental and physical health had seriously deteriorated during his ordeal. Very shortly afterwards, he was detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 where he remained for nearly a year.

What we found

The council had seriously failed Billy by not offering him suitable accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. It had also failed to plan for the foreseeable need for suitable accommodation for homeless young people, and had considered the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and static caravans routinely acceptable as accommodation for homeless young people.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

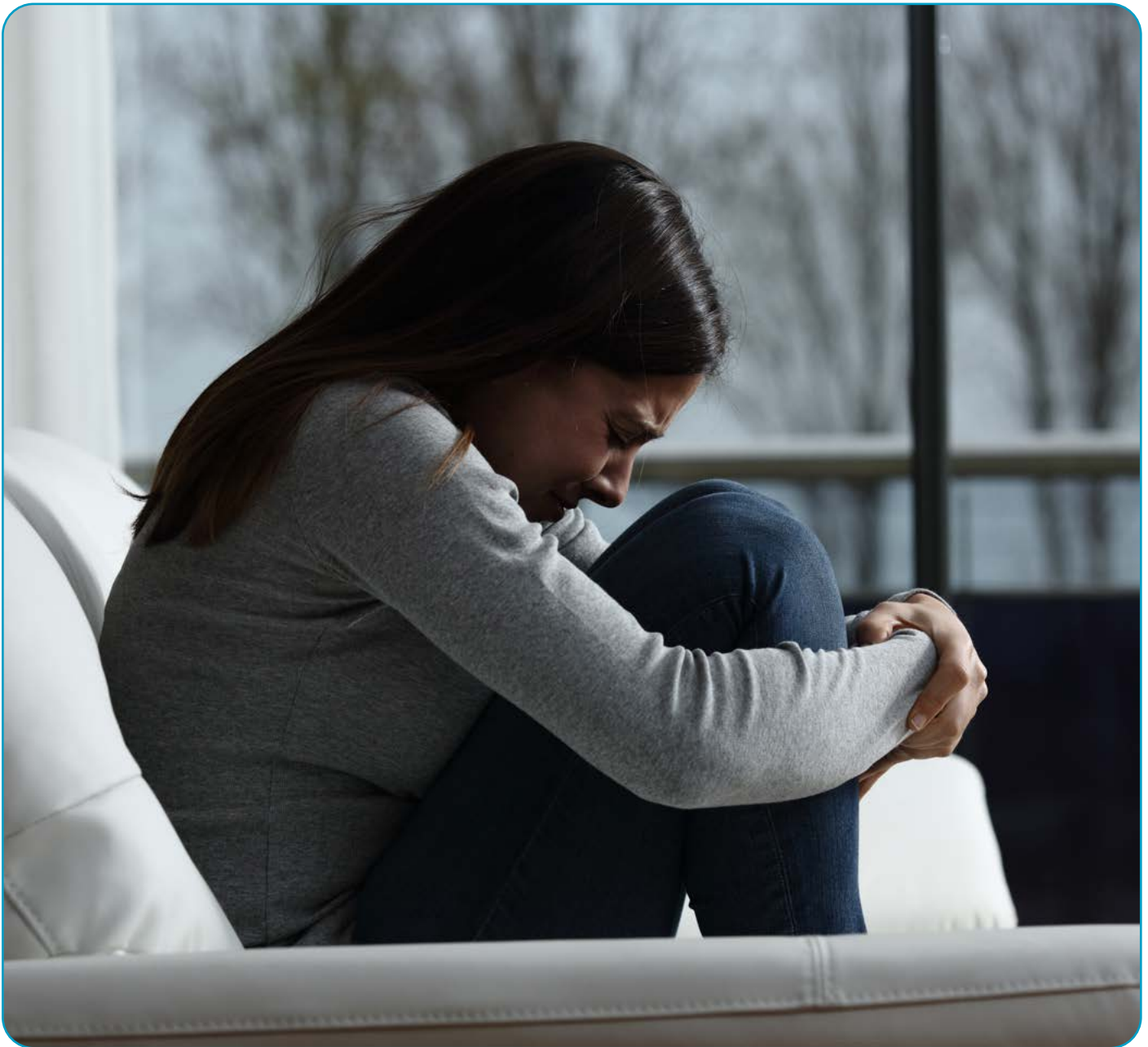
- > apologise to Billy
- > pay him £2,500 for the distress it caused and placing him at risk

Learning points

Councils should:

- > properly consider the risks to vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds if they refuse offers of accommodation
- > ensure staff are fully aware of their councils' duties to, and there is sufficient suitable accommodation for, this age group

Common Issues



Care leavers

Councils should publish a Local Offer, informing care leavers of the services available to them. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extended the length of time all care leavers should have personal advisor, up to the age of 25.

In 2018 the government launched the Care Leaver Covenant – a pledge to help people leaving care to become independent. It was said at the time: *“we are the parents for these children and young people and the way to think about that is what would I want for my child”*.

Common Issues - care leavers



Donna's story

Case reference: [17 012 557](#)

Donna grew up in the council's care. She had to leave foster care when she turned 18, which was the policy at the time. Donna moved into a hostel despite telling the council she did not feel ready.

On the day she moved, she was surprised to find her belongings had been packed up. She was put in a taxi alone and sent to the hostel.

Over the next two years the council failed to support Donna well. She was told she had to bid for council accommodation although she was anxious about taking on this responsibility.

She took on the tenancy of a one bedroom flat but was not helped or advised about claiming housing benefit. She fell into rent arrears.

The council, as landlord, took eviction procedures. Donna approached the leaving care team but was told to approach an advice agency. A Possession Order was granted, and she lost her property. Donna had to put her possessions in storage and, for the next three years, lived with friends.

Donna complained to the council. It was a year before the council sent a reply.

During our investigation, the council agreed to pay Donna's rent arrears and she successfully bid for another one bed property.

What we found

We investigated Donna's complaint even though she did not approach us within a year of her knowing about the issue. We recognise care leavers may not be well versed in their rights and it is often not until they are older that they begin to understand the council's actions were wrong.

We found the council had not talked to Donna properly about how it could support her or help her with her anxieties. It had never told Donna when she would be moving, and the social worker did not accompany her to the hostel. She also did not visit her within 24 hours as required or meet the hostel provider within three days.

The council accepted it had "systematically failed" Donna and this had a significant impact on her being homeless for three years.



An individual remedy

The council agreed to:

- > reimburse Donna's storage costs
- > pay Donna £6,000 for not providing suitable accommodation and her avoidable distress
- > help Donna to manage her tenancy



Service improvements for all

The council agreed to review its leaving care procedures in light of Donna's case.

Learning points

Care leavers must be helped to move into independent living and be fully supported, as required. They should have a personal adviser and pathway plan. No child in care should have their belongings packed for them and be told unawares that they must move that day.

Promoting Good Practice

While remedying individual injustice is an essential part of what we do, we also have a wider role to help councils tackle systemic failures and improve the way they deal with complaints. In many cases we ask councils whether other people are currently, or could be, affected by the same issues raised in a particular complaint.

Practical examples of action taken by councils following our investigations include:

- > Updating local procedures to ensure better communication between council departments, for example, protocols for housing and children's social care departments. Also providing staff training on implementing these when dealing with homeless 16 and 17 year olds
- > Ensuring that local policies properly include family and friends' carers in their fostering payment rates
- > Reviewing procedures for accommodating children with family members in an emergency, to ensure that they are recognised as carers and paid accordingly
- > Amending working procedures to ensure plans for children in care are properly kept under review using the statutory review process and avoiding children drifting in care
- > Carrying out a review of other similar cases, to identify people also affected by the faults we had identified

Drawing on our casework we have identified some recommendations based on examples of good practice in councils. The list below sets out some positive steps councils can take:

- > Providing children in care with promotional material, for example on its website, highlighting how to complain under the statutory children's complaints procedure
- > Providing guidelines about exercising discretion to look at historical complaints from young people, who have been in care
- > Providing information about advocacy services to children in care
- > Providing specially trained social and housing workers to work with homeless 16 and 17 year olds
- > Ensuring compliance with the statutory review process and ensuring children's voices are heard
- > Promoting contact with relatives if in the interests of the child and they wish to see family members
- > Preventing drift and delay in care planning
- > Ensuring care leavers receive their entitlements
- > Ensuring children in care, who are subsequently deprived of their liberty, receive services as a looked after child, to which they remain entitled, and ensuring they have access to the statutory complaints system

Encouraging local accountability – questions for scrutiny

We want to share learning from complaints brought to us with locally elected councillors who have the democratic right to scrutinise the way councils carry out their functions and hold them to account. This is particularly important for looked after children where the council is their corporate parent.

Our experience has highlighted key questions elected members could ask officers when scrutinising services for looked after children:

Accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds

- > How many 16 and 17 years old are in bed and breakfast accommodation or in unregulated homes?
- > What action is the council taking to ensure their welfare is promoted and safeguarded?

The placing of children in care

- > How many children in care are placed out of area, or at a distance, and are social workers visiting these children in accordance with statutory requirements?
- > How many placement moves does a child in care have on average?
- > How many children in care are now in permanent placements?
- > Have children in care been placed in a school within 20 days of a placement move if they are unable to attend their previous school?
- > What action is the council taking to ensure sufficient accommodation is available for children in their care within their home area?
- > Do children in care have up to date personal education plans?
- > How does the virtual school head manage the school age pupil premium?
- > Are there delays in the Education, Health and Care plan process?

Encouraging local accountability – questions for scrutiny

Learning from complaints

- > What concerns have independent reviewing officers raised about children in care and are they satisfied that care planning is appropriate and that recommendations, made at their statutory review meetings, are being implemented promptly?
- > Is there a robust dispute resolution process to ensure cases are appropriately escalated to senior managers by independent reviewing officers?
- > Are the council's leaflets or website information about how to make complaints clear to children and young people? Are they easily available?
- > Are children and young people told about their entitlement to ask for an advocate?
- > How many complaints has a council received from children in care (either from them or on their behalf)? What has been the outcome and the learning from them?

Children in secure accommodation

- > How many children in care are deprived of their liberty either in youth offending units, secure children's homes or in a child or adolescent psychiatric unit? Are they still receiving services as a child in care?
- > Is there sufficient planning and support for these children when released or discharged from these secure settings?
- > Has the council agreed with its health partners an aftercare policy for children in care, who have been detained under the Mental Health Act then discharged into the community?

Children leaving care

- > How many care leavers are being provided with services and are the arrangements satisfactory?
- > Does the council have a Local Offer on its website which explains what care leavers are entitled to?

We would encourage councillors to look at the issues highlighted in this report, as well as the complaints raised locally, to ensure that their services to children in care receive proper and effective scrutiny and that those services are accountable to local people.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614

Web: www.lgo.org.uk

Twitter: [@LGOmbudsman](https://twitter.com/LGOmbudsman)

CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL: MARCH 25, 2021

SERVICE RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Appendix 2: Position statement against LGSCO areas of focus

Area of focus	Position Statement	Reporter	Designation
Accommodation for 16- and 17-year olds			
How many 16 and 17 years old are in bed and breakfast accommodation or in unregulated homes?	<p>There are currently no 16- and 17-year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation and 15 young people in unregulated provision.</p> <p>Regarding unregulated provision, the majority of the provisions used are part of the 16+ South Central Framework, therefore each provider has successfully tendered to be part of the contract. We request to see necessary paperwork, such as Statement of Purpose, Location Risk Assessment and policies. We will also link in with the other Local Authorities on the framework to check if they have used the provider's if SCC is yet to place with them.</p> <p>All LA's on the framework are in regular communication and share info around any ongoing concerns etc.</p> <p>For the placements that are not on the framework (these tend to be out area requests) the team will ensure that they request all necessary paper work, obtain references from at least 2x other Local Authorities and complete a Monitoring Visit to ensure all is okay.</p>	Data team / Brett Purdy	Placement Team Manager

<p>What action is the council taking to ensure their welfare is promoted and safeguarded?</p>	<p>In addition to the commissioning / placement safeguards detailed above, the service has provided the following information: With regards 16/17-year olds in B&B or unregulated provisions, if we were to make such a placement it would only ever be after we'd exhausted all other possible alternatives.</p> <p>The use of B&B would always have to have been agreed at director level if it had to be used and it would always be supported with a robust risk assessment and with preferred accommodation providers, so we'd know in advance if the placement was suitable.</p> <p>We would try always to take the young person to the accommodation ourselves to help them settle in and would always ensure practical things such as toiletries and food or money to buy food were left with the young person. We would have daily contact with the young person and any stay necessary would be as brief as possible with efforts to source alternative accommodation being ongoing until we are able to move the young person on to more suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>Julian Watkins</p>	<p>Head of Service – Children's Social Care</p>
<p>The placing of children in care</p>			
<p>How many children in care are placed out of area, or at a distance, and are social workers visiting these children in accordance with statutory requirements?</p>	<p>Regarding children placed outside of Southampton, we measure the percentage of children placed >20 miles from the address from which they entered our care. The most recent corporate parenting data (Q2 2020 / 21) gives a percentage of 21.7%, 4% higher than the national average. Overall, the trend has been decreasing since 2011 / 12 (10%). The accommodation element of the Destination 22 programme (including residential provision) and the refreshed Fostering Strategy are components of the service response.</p>	<p>Data Team</p>	<p>NA</p>

	<p>CHAT data shows that on 1st March 81% of looked after children had been visited within 6 weeks. The percentage for children without Southampton post codes was 74%.</p>		
<p>How many placement moves does a child in care have on average?</p>	<p>Over the last 12 months, 58% of the children we look have had no move, 27% have had one move, 10% have had two moves, 3% have had three moves and 2% have had four or more moves.</p> <p>A move can be a positive experience for a child. It could be part of their plan to transition to a more suitable home. However, for some the move may be unplanned and experienced with a greater degree of disruption. Sadly, for some children we find it difficult to find the right home for them and where there is not a good match sustaining the home long term may not be feasible.</p> <p>National data produced by the Children’s Commissioner (The Stability Index 2020) tells us that for those children in care for the duration of 2019/2020, 67% of children had no moves over the 12 months period and 10% had 2 plus moves over the 12-month period. We are in line with this national data, 67% of children had no moves over the 12 months period and 12% had 2 plus moves over the 12-month period.</p>	Martin Smith	Service Manager Permanence
<p>How many children in care are now in permanent placements?</p>	<p>Children need permanence through securing a home that will last for their majority. There are key milestones along a child’s permanence journey that we track upon a child coming into our care. We know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By three months there is an agreed plan for their long-term care - 97% of children. 	Martin Smith	Service Manager Permanence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By 9 months they are living in their long-term home and this has been agreed as long-term home – 48% of children. - By 24 months 65% of children are living in their long-term home and this has been agreed as long-term home. - 57% of children, whose permanence plan is long term fostering, are matched with their carers. We would expect percentage to be around 70-80% <p>We know that there is a cohort of children, whose permanence plan is long term fostering and they are living with their long-term foster families, but this has not been ratified by the required procedures. We have worked to ratify these arrangements, seeing an increase from 42 to 57% over the last 6 months.</p>		
<p>Have children in care been placed in a school within 20 days of a placement move if they are unable to attend their previous school?</p>	<p>As below, this data is correct as of 08/03/2021:</p> <p>Between 01/09/20 and 08/03/21 90 pupils required a school move; 66 were in mainstream school (all but two (both with more complex needs were placed) and 22 SEND pupils. No SEND pupils were placed within 20 working days, but all SEND pupils who move placement are offered a remote learning offer by their current school or a tuition provider and we collect attendance.</p>	<p>Maria Anderson</p>	<p>Head of Virtual School</p>
<p>What action is the council taking to ensure sufficient accommodation is available for children in</p>	<p>Since the implementation of the Children Act 1989 local authorities have been required to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children within their local authority area (Section 22G Children Act 1989). This is now referred to as ‘the sufficiency duty’.</p>	<p>Martin Smith</p>	<p>Service Manager Permanence</p>

<p>their care within their home area?</p>	<p>The actions the council is taking to meet our 'sufficiency duty' is outlined in the "Looked after children and care leavers placement commissioning sufficiency statement and strategy 2020-25". This strategy was approved by cabinet on 17 March 2020. Key actions and progress to date include:</p>				
	<p>Theme</p>	<p>Key Actions</p>	<p>Examples of progress to date</p>		
<p>Foster families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance traditional recruitment and marketing activities whilst piloting innovative strategies to attract carers through engagement with local communities, employers and partnerships. • Enhance the support offer to foster carers with a focus on retention and supporting our carers. • Establish a specialist foster care scheme (Tier 4) offering placements to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand refresh; "Fostering Southampton". Marketing materials and publications refreshed eg local bus stop signage. • 10% uplift to allowances paid to foster carer to bring in line with other local providers. • 'Step-across' fostering scheme to start recruiting carers in March 2021. • Recommissioning of external providers underway and to 			

		children with complex needs and behaviours and those children requiring a step down from a residential placements.	be completed by April 2021.		

	<p>Children's Homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and progress options for securing access to residential provision within the local area, including seeking block contract arrangements with local providers on the Children's Residential Care Framework and seeking to develop local council run residential care provision within the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local children's home project scoped and presented to EMB in March 2021. 		
	<p>Supported Accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review of the types and range of Post 16 supported accommodation required to inform future decisions regarding contract extension and the commissioning of future service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommissioning of external providers completed in 2020 which enhanced the number of local providers on framework. 		

		provision based on identified need and priorities.			
	Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt South. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and financial contribution to deliver of recruitment of and support to local adopters completed. 		
	<p>Building of the sufficiency strategy the “Destination 22 Transformation Programme” is reviewing and looking to enhance the local accommodation pathway for the children we look after. The table below outlines the workstreams and timescales around this programme.</p>				
	Workstream		Timescales		
	Workstream 1: Refresh the Housing Pathway and Protocol		March 2021		
	Workstream 2: Review the locality-based assets for children and young people		April 2021		
	Workstream 3: Expand the Local Children’s Home provision		January 2022		

	Workstream 4: Review the In-House Fostering Provision	March 2021		
	Workstream 5: Recommission the IFA Framework / Residential Home Framework / 16+ HRS Support contracts	March 2022/Sept 2024/ March 2023		
Do children in care have up to date personal education plans?	This measure is reported termly, December 2020 - 98.6% PEPs up to date, on which: 86.6% were good/outstanding. This is also reported through the VSHT annual report.		Maria Anderson	Head of Virtual School
How does the virtual school head manage the school age pupil premium?	<p>This is reported through the Virtual School Head Teacher's annual report. Guidance is produced that details the allocations to schools. Each PEP is also signed off by the virtual school and pupil premium spend is audited.</p> <p><i>Leaders of the virtual school understand the importance of their role as advocates for children in care and work efficiently. Funding for these children is used well to improve their education experiences. Leaders provide helpful training that supports designated teachers in schools to have high expectations of children and receive useful help. Schools are effectively held to account for the impact of their work through regular reviews of children's personal education plans. Consequently, children in care in Southampton attain in line with their peers elsewhere in England' (Ofsted, Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, Southampton, November 2019)</i></p>		Maria Anderson	Head of Virtual School

<p>Are there delays in the Education, Health and Care plan process?</p>	<p>There is an increase in requests nationally, some LAs are working within timeframes, some are not, and this will adversely affect our children placed out of area. As vice chair of SE regional virtual school headteachers, we have a meeting booked with DfE to explore this further. However, the current position is that 100% of Southampton Education, Health and Care Plans are being completed on time.</p>	<p>Maria Anderson/Tammy Marks</p>	<p>Head of Virtual School/Service Manager SEND</p>
<p>Learning from complaints</p>			
<p>What concerns have independent reviewing officers raised about children in care and are they satisfied that care planning is appropriate and that recommendations, made at their statutory review meetings, are being implemented promptly?</p>	<p><u>Care Planning</u></p> <p>The purpose of the Care Plan Review is to consider the quality of the child's care plan, based on the local authority's assessment of the child's needs. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must be satisfied that the care plan identifies who is responsible for achieving the plan's objectives and clear timescales set. Additionally, in Southampton, the progress report is embedded in the Care Plan and therefore crucial that this is shared with the IRO. Analysis of the IRO Alerts data tells us that 34% of 97 informal Alerts raised from 1st April 2020 to 26th Feb 2021 were as a result of no recorded/updated Care Plan shared with the IRO and, as a result, the Care Plan Review was adjourned.</p> <p>In 2019/20 this figure was 22.6% (April-March) therefore an increase (to date) in 2020/21. Consequently, the IRO Service has worked with others to develop training that aims to support workers in understanding the importance of high-quality planning and reviews with a key focus on permanence. An e-learning training session will launch in April 2021. This will be accompanied by a suite of resources offering guidance for workers.</p>	<p>Elizabeth Robertson</p>	<p>IRO Team Manager</p>

	<p>Themes are identified through Care Plan Reviews and Alerts raised such as the need for focused direct work with children to help them understand why he/she is in care. This has influenced practice thus allowing IRO activity to contribute to the authority's understanding of strengths, weaknesses and plans for improvement</p> <p><u>Drift and delay in achieving permanence</u></p> <p>18.8% of IRO Alerts raised between April 20-February 21 were as a result of drift and delay in achieving permanence for the child. In 2019/20, this figure was 12% of IRO Alerts raised. However, the increase is a direct result of a range of activity around permanence such as the formal mid-way review, introduced in June 2019 which allows the IRO to monitor progress of the care plan and ensure that the decisions of the review have been implemented within the agreed timescale. Between April and Dec 2020, 366 mid-way reviews took place where permanence has yet to be achieved for the child/young person.</p> <p>The local authority Permanence Guidance was updated in November 2020 which included clarity around expectations of a plan of permanence to be shared at the 2nd Care Plan Review. Since this time, IROs have escalated cases where the Care Plan has not included a range of permanence options being considered for the child or the consideration of these is insufficient. It is hoped that this will prevent any further delay and drift in achieving permanence for the child.</p> <p><u>Audit</u></p>		
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	<p>A recent IRO audit of ten children new into our care highlighted that inclusive Care Planning meetings are not routinely held and recorded. This would echo a view frequently expressed by the IRO Service. It is clear however from recordings of the PLO process and Legal Gateway meetings that there is a good awareness of cases, concerns and risks. The audit highlighted some good work relating to assessments and planning alongside some deficits. It is clear however that Family Group Conferences have not been a routine part of case work and care planning. The extension of FGC's is a focus for the service as part of its Destination 22 service-redesign programme.</p>		
<p>Is there a robust dispute resolution process to ensure cases are appropriately escalated to senior managers by independent reviewing officers?</p>	<p>The dispute resolution process (IRO Alert) was amended in January 2016 to ensure that a formal management alert system was in place and has since been used effectively to highlight concerns and ensure that improvements take place. In 2018, further amendments were made to ensure that collaboration between Team Managers and IROs was evident.</p> <p>Our data evidences that the majority of issues raised by IROs are resolved at the informal stage of the dispute resolution process. (64.71% of all alerts raised between April 20-Feb 21). If not resolved at the informal stage, the Alert is escalated appropriately to Senior Managers.</p>	<p>Elizabeth Robertson</p>	<p>IRO Team Manager</p>
<p>Are the council's leaflets or website information about how to make complaints clear to children and young</p>	<p>Accessibility of complaints process</p> <p>Our complaints form is accessible and easy to find online. Complaints leaflets go out in the introduction packs to children, parents and carers. These have been updated recently. In normal circumstances, posters advising service</p>	<p>Elizabeth Robertson/Georgie Batchelor</p>	<p>IRO Team Manager</p> <p>Complaints Single Point of Contact Officer</p>

<p>people? Are they easily available?</p>	<p>users how to complain on the walls in Church View and in Sure Start centres.</p> <p>In 2020/21, the IRO Service has produced information factsheets for children and young people. When a child/young person first comes into our care, he/she is sent a letter with an information factsheet from our service about our service, the role of the IRO and Care Plan Reviews. We have also updated our factsheets for parents, foster carers and adopters.</p> <p>Following the initial Care Plan Review a child friendly report and/or a letter is sent to the child/young person. Children and young people are also sent information regarding the Children In Care Council, our advocacy and independent visitor service, Mind Of My Own and the Virtual School.</p>		
<p>Are children and young people told about their entitlement to ask for an advocate?</p>	<p>Children and young people are routinely sent information by the IRO Service regarding the Children In Care Council, our advocacy and independent visitor service, Mind Of My Own and the Virtual School.</p> <p>The Review Arrangements form introduced in July 2020 prompts the social worker to consider if the child/young person requires the support of an advocate to participate in the Care Plan Review.</p> <p>The IRO will discuss advocacy with the child at the Care Plan Review meeting.</p>	<p>Elizabeth Robertson</p>	<p>IRO Team Manager</p>
<p>How many complaints has a council received from children in care (either from them or on</p>	<p>Stage 1</p> <p>In the past 12 months three complaints have been made by children themselves and two by parents on behalf of their</p>	<p>Georgie Batchelor</p>	<p>Single Point of Contact Officer, Legal & Governance</p>

<p>their behalf)? What has been the outcome and the learning from them?</p>	<p>children. The of the complaints are still underway, so learning has not been confirmed.</p> <p>Core themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent changes of social worker. • Lack of contact with social worker (not upheld, evidence provided to complainant). <p>The stability of staffing within the looked after children team is an area of focus in the service Destination 22 programme.</p> <p>We have had no stage 2 complaints in the past 12 months. We have had investigation conclude from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). This involved the local authority providing support for a young person being released from custody. The outcome is that our YOS safeguarding protocol is being reviewed.</p>		
<p>Children in secure accommodation</p>			
<p>How many children in care are deprived of their liberty either in youth offending units, secure children's homes or in a child or adolescent psychiatric unit? Are they still receiving services as a child in care?</p>	<p>The number of children in this cohort are usually small. There are currently three children across the placements listed. The service is currently in the process of commissioning Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) training for relevant staff.</p>	<p>Data Team</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Is there sufficient planning and support for these children when</p>	<p>Discharge planning informed by an assessment of need or multi-agency contributions is an area for improvement.</p>	<p>Elizabeth Robertson</p>	<p>IRO Team Manager</p>

released or discharged from these secure settings?	Discharge plans are not always explicit or embedded within care/pathway planning.		
Has the council agreed with its health partners an aftercare policy for children in care, who have been detained under the Mental Health Act then discharged into the community?	<p>There is not a formal policy in place. Community Adolescent Mental Health Services follow good practice principles and have minimum standards.</p> <p>In relation to more general mental health needs, a recent health audit undertaken for the Corporate Parenting Board identified mental health support as an area for improvement.</p>	Julian Watkins	Head of Service – Children’s Social Care
Children leaving care			
How many care leavers are being provided with services and are the arrangements satisfactory?	165 care leavers up to 19 years and 57 care leavers 21 to 25 years. Pathway planning and levels of contact with care leavers are consistently good; 97% currently have an authorised care plan. The key areas of focus for this cohort are accommodation suitability (84% are in contact and in suitable accommodation; statistical neighbour average is 92%) ensuring a focus on their health needs through health passports and increasing the number in education training and employment (on 1 st March 2021, 49% of 1 – 18 year olds and 45% of 19 – 21 year olds were in education, training or employment).	Mary Hardy	Service Manager, Looked after Children and Care Leavers.
Does the council have a Local Offer on its website which explains what care leavers are entitled to?	The local authority is required to Local Offer on its website which explains what care leavers are entitled to. The link to the Southampton local offer is appended here .	Mary Hardy	Service Manager, Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

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DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY WITH LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS
DATE OF DECISION:	25 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Children and Learning	
	Name:	Robert Henderson	Tel: 023 8083 4899
	E-mail	robert.henderson@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Voice of the Child Programme Lead	
	Name:	Jenny Molloy	Tel: 023 8083 4102
	E-mail	Jenny.molloy@southampton.gov.uk	
	Title	Quality Assurance Unit Manager and Principal Social Worker	
	Name:	Stuart Webb	
	E-mail	stuart.webb@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
Not applicable	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
This paper provides an overview of participatory activity being undertaken with looked after children and care leavers by Jenny Molloy, a care experienced trainer and facilitator commissioned by the Children and Learning Service to increase the level of engagement of looked after children in service development and improvement.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
	(i) That the Scrutiny Panel reviews and comments on the initiatives outlined in this report.
	(ii) That members of the Scrutiny Panel commit to completing Total Respect training.
	(iii) That the Executive Director provides assurance at the next Scrutiny Panel meeting that the issues affected the looked after children summarised in paragraph 19 have been addressed.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	It is important that the Children and Learning Service ensures that its participatory activity is robust as part of its corporate parenting responsibilities. Looked after children and care leavers should be supported to have their say in their care and the local authority should listen and act upon their insights.

	Participation is also an area that Ofsted assesses local authority children's services on as part of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	<p>In 2018, the Department of Education (DfE) published its corporate parenting principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people • to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings • to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people • to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners • to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people • for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and • to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living <p>Good participatory activity with looked after children and care leavers supports the Council and partners to adhere to these principles.</p>
4.	<p>In 2019, Ofsted reviewed Southampton's participatory activity and found that:</p> <p><i>Senior leaders and politicians have launched a wide range of initiatives for children in care, demonstrating energy and zeal in their corporate parenting roles. The new lead member for children is bringing fresh impetus, scrutiny and insights in his role as chair of the corporate parenting board. Children's participation and feedback is widespread, multi-layered imaginative and influential.</i></p>
5.	<p>Unfortunately, the onset of the Covid pandemic impacted. By December 2020, the Children in Care Council and care leaver's forum were not functioning and the dedicated looked after children participation worker had started a secondment. Positively, two care experienced apprentices have started in the service; however, they are being inducted and therefore need time to develop in role.</p>
6.	<p>In order to ensure that robust participatory activity resumed at pace the Children and Learning Service commissioned Jenny Molloy, a care experienced trainer and facilitator to work with looked after children and care leavers. Working with the corporate participation team, the impact of this action has been immediate and in the remaining section of this report we set out the different areas of work in train.</p>

	Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum
7.	Central to any good participation work is the direct engagement with children and young people. During the pandemic, children were not engaging. However, we have worked with the social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers to reach children and young people to form two new groups, which have been officially named this week at the group meeting.
8.	We have 21 engaged children and young people, who have all attended regularly. There was a large dip in last week's numbers, down from 21 to 8, which was reported as being due to the children's other commitments during half term.
9.	The decision by the group was to name the groups with Southampton Voices Unite and Southampton Voices Unite seniors. It was very interesting to see the determination in the children and young people with having the inclusion of Southampton in their group name. They felt very strongly that they were 'Southampton children' and therefore wanted to be known as such. This is a fantastic sign of a solid sense of belonging which can be built from within these groups. There will be a soft launch of both groups, with the formal launch being at the Love our Children week in September.
	The Work Schedule - 'Love our Children – Corporate Parenting'
10.	Given that we now have a programme of work up and running, the programme title that has been chosen by our children and young people is – Love Our Children – Corporate Parenting, with the Corporate in Corporate Parenting purposefully crossed through, with the idea that the corporate parenting becomes more parenting and less corporate.
11.	<p>The work schedule over the next 3 months includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design Work the Terms of Reference Creating the Terms of Reference and logo. 2. Creating a film on what life looks like through the eyes of the child in the care of Southampton Council To be shown in Love our Children week. 3. Creating an art exhibition depicting their thoughts and feelings about: What they need/want from their corporate parent. Good practice in looked after and care leaver services and what the challenges for them as children and young people are. 4. Creating a set of Commitments for both looked after and care leaver services, which need formal adoption during Love our Children week. <p>The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum will be writing a set of local commitments they will ask the Council the sign up to. These will complement the National Pledge. Art will be used to gather the thoughts and</p>

	<p>feelings of what ‘excellent care’ looks like to them. These will officially be launched at the ‘Love Our Children’ week.</p> <p>5. Developing the Positive Relationships Awards</p> <p>Our children and young people will be nominating a special professional in their lives to receive an award from them during our ‘Love our Children’ week. Nominations will be taken from June 2021, with the Children in Care Council leading the event. More to come nearer the time</p> <p>6. Formal adoption of the Care Experienced Conference pledge</p> <p>We are launching a crafters campaign to light up Southampton Council with love! We are asking for all employees and partners of the council to get behind our campaign and help us by knitting as many hearts as possible for our giant love heart mural. This mural will form part of the opening ceremony for ‘Love our Children’ week in September and will remain lit up for the entire week. This will become an annual event, with the mural being an integral part of the celebrations.</p>
12.	<p>Robert Henderson, Executive Director attended the Children in Care Council and was given some firm messages from the children on what they liked and didn’t like about their lives. The themes that came from that meeting are:</p> <p>Overall children enjoyed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with their current carers • Having animals as pets <p>Overall children told us they didn’t enjoy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being moved from one home to another • Having changes of social workers often • Being placed in homes different to those of their birth families. • Contact with their families not happening often enough. <p>These messages will not come as a surprise to anyone, but we must not become complacent. The children and young people will now expect a response from the Executive Director on how he is planning to tackle these issues.</p>
	Ofsted Social Care National Consultative Forum Care leavers’ sub-group
13.	<p>We were successful in achieving a place for one of our young people on this group. We are now the second local authority with representation from a young person, with Croydon Council being the other. This group will help Ofsted’s thinking with how to engage children and young people in inspection and the priorities for Inspectors.</p>
	All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for children in and leaving care
14.	<p>We have applied to become part of the APPG and will be attending with two of our young people (the maximum number allowed) at the next event. It is a fantastic opportunity for our children and young people to experience, with</p>

	<p>the events being held in Portcullis House. We will be attending in person once the Covid restrictions have been lifted.</p> <p>(https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/improving-the-care-system/appg/)</p>
	<p>National Review of the Social Care System</p>
15.	<p>The Department for Education announced a National Review of the Social Care system in January 2021 with Josh MacAlister as the Review Chair. The first steps for the Review were a call for advice and a recruitment campaign for an Experts by Experience group which will help lead and shape the review. The IRO's took up the challenge for engagement of our young people together with Jenny Molloy, with an incredible 71 applications received by the DfE. This is an incredible achievement. Overall, there was 1100 applications, and against that cohort, one of our children was selected for interview. The panel were extremely impressed by our 11-year-old and as a result they are seeking to secure him a place on the young person's board. All 71 children and young people will have the opportunity of engaging further.</p>
	<p>Why am I in Care?</p>
16.	<p>The Brightspots survey in 2018 told us that too many of our children and young people do not understand why they are in care. This can have serious consequences on the child or young person's chances of stability in care. Further, children can struggle with a sense of belonging and safety if they are unsure of the reasons that they do not live with their birth family. Therefore, as a response to this, we are developing and implementing a supportive programme to help social workers have difficult conversations with looked after children about their 'care story' using The Narrative Model. The programme consists of 2 training workshops, drop-in surgeries for direct work discussions and webinars with the model authors.</p>
17.	<p>The programme will provide opportunities to discuss why some children may not understand why they are in care, and some of the reasons why professionals may struggle with the complex task of sharing and developing a clear care narrative for the child. This model will support professionals with a clear framework which can be used when developing the child's care story creating a clear history for the child. This is vital direct work for the child or young person's emotional wellbeing. The programme will be launched in the March practice week.</p>
	<p>Total Respect</p>
18.	<p>We are introducing the National accredited training programme, Total Respect which is designed, delivered and led by young people who have experienced the care system. The focus of the session is to positively change the way staff listen to and respond to looked after children and is relevant to all children's social care professionals, including Members and Carers. We are implementing bitesize sessions to begin with given the delivery online with the first bitesize session will be available in the Easter holidays so please keep an eye out for the dates.</p>
	<p>Service Improvement</p>
19.	<p>As part of Jenny's work with the independent reviewing officer service a small number of cases have been identified where there has been an unacceptable</p>

	delay in addressing the children's needs. This has been escalated to the Executive Director and his management team in order to secure their resolution.
20.	Jenny would like to take the opportunity to thank the Independent Reviewing Officers for their enthusiasm and engagement with all of the above projects. The team have been incredible with their efforts helping us to reach as many children and young people as possible.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

21.	N/A
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Property/Other

22.	N/A
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

23.	S.111 Local Government Act 1972
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Other Legal Implications:

24.	N/A
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RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

25.	The principal risk is that looked after children and care leavers would be disadvantaged if a local authority was failing to discharge its corporate parenting duties effectively. The risk is mitigated through the local authority quality assurance process and governance via the Corporate Parenting Committee.
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POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

26.	<p>The Corporate Plan 2020 sets out the following regarding the wellbeing of children in the city:</p> <p>“Working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this area looks at wellbeing across the city, with a focus on adults and children’s social care, education and public health. We work closely with partners to help safeguard vulnerable people across the city. We are focused on delivering strong customer experience across the Adults and Children & Families services. We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its proactive approach to preventing problems and intervening early, as well being a ‘Child Friendly City’ where children and young people have great opportunities and an aspiration to achieve. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to lead safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.</p>
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KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	

Appendices	
1.	None
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
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

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DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE
DATE OF DECISION:	25 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR – LEGAL AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Deputy Chief Executive	
	Name:	Mike Harris	Tel: 023 8083 2882
	E-mail	Mike.harris@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Scrutiny Manager	
	Name:	Mark Pirnie	Tel: 023 8083 3886
	E-mail	Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
Attached as Appendix 1 are the key data sets for Children and Learning up to the end of February 2021. At the meeting the Cabinet Member and senior managers from Children and Learning will be providing the Panel with an overview of performance across the division since December 2020.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
(i)	That the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	To enable effective scrutiny of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	To enable the Panel to undertake their role effectively members will be provided with appropriate performance information on a monthly basis and an explanation of the measures.
4.	Performance information up to 28 February 2021 is attached in Appendix 1. An explanation of the significant variations in performance will be provided at the meeting.
5.	The Cabinet Member, and representatives from the Children and Learning Senior Management Team, have been invited to attend the meeting to provide the performance overview.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u>	

6.	None directly as a result of this report.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
7.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
8.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
9.	None
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
10.	<p>The Corporate Plan 2020 sets out the following regarding the wellbeing of children in the city:</p> <p>“Working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this area looks at wellbeing across the city, with a focus on adults and children’s social care, education and public health. We work closely with partners to help safeguard vulnerable people across the city. We are focused on delivering strong customer experience across the Adults and Children & Families services. We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its proactive approach to preventing problems and intervening early, as well being a ‘Child Friendly City’ where children and young people have great opportunities and an aspiration to achieve. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to lead safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.”</p>

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Children and Families Monthly Dataset – December 2020
2.	Glossary of terms

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 /
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		Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None	

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Qualitative measures:			Key to direction of travel:		
Positive	Similar	Negative	Increase 10% or more	Similar	Decrease 10% or more
			↑	→	↓

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):
M1	Number of contacts received (includes contacts that become referrals)	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>There is an effective 'front door' with which anyone with a concern about a child can engage and receive appropriate advice, support and action.</i>	1343	1607	1555	1787	1507	1464	1297	↑ 15%		1414	1787	Local	Local	Local				The number of contacts received during February decreased by 11%. Whilst February is a shorter month, there are still some concerns around hidden harm during the lockdown period.
M2	Number of new referrals of Children In Need (CiN)	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Referrals for children in need of help and support are accepted appropriately by the service.</i>	263	357	368	449	351	271	244	↓ -23%		324	449	368	353	502				The number of new referrals of Children in need as decreased by 10% which is in line with the decrease in Contacts being received by MASH during the same period.
M3	Percentage of all contacts that become new referrals of Children In Need (CiN)	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Children and families receive the help they need at the right time, and from the best possible resource - in line with the established continuum of need.</i>	20%	22%	24%	25%	23%	19%	19%	↓ -33%		23%	26%	Local	Local	Local				The percentage of contacts that become new referrals remains the same as January. The MASH decision making continues to be scrutinised through audit and no concerns have been raised.
M2-NI	Number of new referrals of Children in Need (CiN) rate per 10,000 (0-17 year olds)	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Referrals for children in need of help and support are comparable with other local authorities like Southampton.</i>	52	70	72	88	69	53	48	↓ -24%		64	88	Local	Local	Local				The number of new referrals of children in need rate per 10,000 0-17 year olds has continued to decrease. There is no information to compare this with statistical neighbours. This is expected with a decrease in the number of Contacts being received into MASH.
M8-QL	Percentage of referrals dealt with by MASH where time from referral received / recorded to completion by MASH was 24 hours / 1 working day or less	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>The safety of children is supported by referrals being dealt with in a timely manner.</i>	99%	94%	98%	98%	99%	99%	98%	→ -1%	▲	98%	99%	Local	Local	Local				The conversion rate for the 1 working day decision making is at 98% for February which is 1% lower than January. MASH continue to work hard to remain compliant with Working Together 2018, despite Navigators working remotely and the complexities of this situation.
M6-QL (val)	Number of referrals which are re-referrals within one year of a closure assessment	Julian Watkins	Sarah Ward	<i>The service is effective in helping children and families address their issues, and where there is a re-referral, the issues are understood.</i>	19	23	27	37	32	8	10	↓ -17%	▼	20	37	Local	Local	Local				This has remained static but will be interesting to review next month to see if schools returning to being fully open impacts on re referrals. This is an area of work which does need further review to ascertain patterns whether it is re referral due to significant safeguarding concerns or whether with more robust early help service the re referral could be prevented. Data is required to enable review of these cases.
M6-QL	Percentage of referrals which are re-referrals within one year of a closure assessment	Julian Watkins	Sarah Ward	<i>The service is effective in helping children and families address their issues, and where there is a re-referral, the issues are understood.</i>	7%	6%	7%	8%	9%	3%	4%	→ 0%	▼	6%	9%	27%	23%	26%				This has remained static but will be interesting to review next month to see if schools returning to being fully open impacts on re referrals. This is an area of work which does need further review to ascertain patterns whether it is re referral due to significant safeguarding concerns or whether with more robust early help service the re referral could be prevented. Data is required to enable review of these cases.
M4	Number of new referrals of children aged 13+ where child sexual exploitation (CSE) was a factor	Julian Watkins	Simon Demmison	<i>The needs and safety of children at risk of child sexual exploitation are responded to effectively.</i>	7	15	2	2	2	2	2	↑ 100%		4	15	Local	Local	Local				A spurious indicator - Quality Assurance (QA) work on September peak showed that a large majority (80%) were inaccurately flagged CSE. Moving forward, the service recommends that consideration is given to a revised indicator linked to CERAF (risk assessment) and monthly MET review data which counts the number of children in the city at risk of criminal and or sexual exploitation and identifies their level of risk.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):
M5	Number of children receiving Early Help services who are stepped up for Children In Need (CiN) assessment	Julian Watkins	Sean Holehouse	<i>The needs and safety of children at risk of child sexual exploitation are responded to effectively.</i>	4	7	14	17	0	4	5	↓ -77%		7	17	Local	Local	Local				Early Help Locality Teams continue to work with families to prevent escalation of need and to refer appropriately where children are at immediate risk and in need of protection. The Early Help Hub Rapid Response Team continue to work with new referred high-end early help cases preventing escalation into Social Care. EH Locality cases are RAG rated and moderated with SW EH lead. The High EH cohort are also reviewed with EWS & schools to share risk information on vulnerable pupils. The number of CSC 'step up' cases in February was below average with 5 recorded.
EH2	Number of Children In Need (CiN) at end of period (all open cases, excluding EHPs, EHAs, CPP and LAC)	Julian Watkins	Sarah Ward	<i>Children in need of help and support receive a consistent and effective service.</i>	1232	1251	1305	1348	1226	1162	1109	↓ -20%	▼	1,266	1,348	Local	Local	Local				There has been a small decrease in the number of cases since last month but a significant decrease over the last year. This is due to a reduction of caseloads over the last year and a review of children who have been subject to CP planning for some time. The work has now cascaded to those children subject to a CiN plan for a period of time or open to Children's Services for some time. This work is in its early stages but should support the progression of CiN cases out of the service, where appropriate. This again, will improve with additional management support and when caseloads reduce further.
EH5-QL	Number of children open to the authority who have been missing at any point in the period (count of children)	Julian Watkins	Simon Demisson	<i>The needs and safety of children who have been missing are responded to robustly.</i>	59	72	69	78	53	49	69	→ -3%	▼	65	83	Local	Local	Local				Average rates - similar to Feb 2020 - prior to lockdown.
EH3	Number of Single Assessments (SA) completed	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Children receive a comprehensive assessment of their needs; with strengths and areas of risk identified to inform evidence-based planning.</i>	248	243	285	346	410	305	304	→ -6%		298	410	354	365	485				The number of single assessments completed during February has remained consistent with January, but is still a decrease from November and December 2020.
EH3a%	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed within 10 days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.</i>	4%	9%	12%	14%	16%	10%	12%	↑ 13%	▲	11%	16%	11%	12%	13%				The percentage of single assessments completed within 10 days has increased and remains similar to statistical neighbours, England and the South East region.
EH3b%	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed within 11-25 days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.</i>	32%	26%	32%	31%	31%	27%	35%	↓ -10%	▲	36%	49%	Local	Local	Local				The percentage of single assessments completed within 11 - 25 days has increase as is similar to the 12 month average.
EH3c%	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed within 26-35 days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.</i>	28%	21%	16%	15%	19%	18%	13%	↓ -36%	▲	18%	28%	Local	Local	Local				The percentage of single assessments completed within 26-35 days has decreased which is likely to be due to the increase in the percentage of single assessments being completed in 11-25 days increasing.
EH3d%	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed within 36-45 days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.</i>	24%	30%	22%	19%	24%	28%	14%	↑ 21%	▲	20%	30%	Local	Local	Local				The percentage of single assessments completed within 36-45 days has seen a significant decline compared with January.
EH3e%	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed over 45 days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	<i>Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.</i>	11%	13%	18%	21%	11%	16%	26%	↑ 41%	▼	15%	26%	15%	16%	15%				The percentage of referrals completed over 45 days has increased from 16% in Jan to 26% in February. One of the Teams in the assessment service had a back log of assessments that had not been completed. This has been addressed and could account for the increase. Single assessments are also completed within other service areas and these could have impacted the increase.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):	
EH4 (val)	Number of Single Assessments (SA) completed in 45 working days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.	221	211	235	272	366	255	226	↓ -15%	▲	253	366								The number of single assessments completed within 45 days has decreased by 11% which is likely to be a result of the decreasing amount of referrals into the service.
EH4-QL	Percentage of Single Assessments (SA) completed in 45 working days	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	Assessments are completed in a timely manner, to ensure that children receive the help they need without unnecessary delay.	89%	87%	82%	79%	89%	84%	74%	↓ -10%	▲	85%	93%								The percentage of single assessments completed within 45 working days is 74% which is lowest percentage for the past year. One of the Teams in the assessment service had a back log of assessments that had not been fully completed. This has been addressed and could account for the decrease. Single assessments are also completed within other service areas and these could have impacted the figure.
CP1	Number of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	Where there are concerns about a child's safety, there is a robust assessment of risk.	81	126	121	167	149	91	91	↓ -23%		119	167	119	110	155					The number of section 47 enquiries started during February remains low which is in line with January. This demonstrates the continued improvement work being undertaken with the social care managers and MASH Partner navigators looking at threshold.
CP1-NI	Rate of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started per 10,000 children aged 0-17	Julian Watkins	Jacqui Schofield	Safeguarding investigations undertaken by the service are at a level that is comparable with other local authorities like Southampton.	16	25	24	33	29	18	18	↓ -22%		23	33	19	14	15					The rate of section 47 enquiries per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years remains consistent with January and is slightly lower than statistical neighbours. This continues to be an area of focus within MASH and Partners, which has brought about improvement in threshold decision making.
CP6B	Number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at the end of the month, including temporary registrations	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	Child Protection Plans are in place for children where it has been assessed that multi-agency intervention is required to keep them safe.	415	393	389	394	399	400	358	↓ -19%		401	426	350	339	427					Reducing trend is noted, as panel activity begins to impact. We will need to carefully monitor the impact of the end of the latest lockdown, as there is a possibility of safeguarding issues being flagged upon children returning to school. Practice Framework will now be launched a month later in May 2021, to tie in with Workforce Academy. Vulnerable Adolescents developmental activity is progressing as planned.
CP6B-NI	Rate of children with Child Protection Plan (CPP) per 10,000 (0-17 year olds) at end of period	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	The number of children who require Child Protection Plans is at a level that is comparable with other local authorities like Southampton.	82	77	77	78	78	79	70	↓ -20%		79	84	53	43	41					Reducing trend is noted, as panel activity begins to impact. We will need to carefully monitor the impact of the end of the latest lockdown, as there is a possibility of safeguarding issues being flagged upon children returning to school. Practice Framework will now be launched a month later in May 2021, to tie in with Workforce Academy. Vulnerable Adolescents developmental activity is progressing as planned.
CP2	Number of children subject to Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs), excluding transfer-Ins and temporary registrations	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	Where it has been assessed that multi-agency intervention is required to keep a child safe, the case is progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference.	22	24	43	56	48	56	20	↓ -13%		42	72	43	42	53					Reduction in ICPC is likely to be because of review of practice around sec.47 decision making by the service. Rate for February 2021 is lower than SN, regional and national averages and will therefore be monitored carefully.
CP2-NI	Rate per 10,000 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	The rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences is at a level that is comparable with other local authorities like Southampton.	5	6	8	12	10	11	4	↓ -17%		9	14	7	5	5					Reduction in ICPC is likely to be because of review of practice around sec.47 decision making by the service. Rate for February 2021 is lower than SN, regional and national averages and will therefore be monitored carefully.
CP4 (val)	Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) resulting in a Child Protection Plan (CPP) (based on count of children)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	Decisions made at Child Protection Conferences will result in appropriate, evidence-based plans for children that respond to, and meet their level of risk and need.	17	22	38	52	42	53	18	→ 0%		38	58								Current month and 12m average conversion of ICPC to plan align exactly with SN average.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):
CP4	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) resulting in a Child Protection Plan (CPP) (based on count of children)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Decisions made at Child Protection Conferences will result in appropriate, evidence-based plans for children that respond to, and meet their level of risk and need.</i>	77%	92%	88%	93%	88%	95%	90%	↑ 15%	▲	90%	97%	90%	87%	86%				Current month and 12m average conversion of ICPC to plan align exactly with SN average.
CP2b	Number of transfer-ins	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Children moving into Southampton receive a good standard of service and protection.</i>	1	7	0	5	3	1	0	↓ -100%		2	7	Local	Local	Local				There were no transfers in this month. When there are transfers, the service manager asks for an update from the CP chair(s) to clarify if transfer procedures have been followed.
CP2b %	Percentage of transfer-ins where child became subject to a CP Plan during period	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Children moving into Southampton receive a good standard of service and protection.</i>	0%	100%	-	80%	100%	100%	-	- n/a		80%	100%	Local	Local	Local				There were no transfers in this month. When there are transfers, the service manager asks for an update from the CP chair(s) to clarify if transfer procedures have been followed.
CP3-QL (val)	Number of children subject to Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) which were held within timescales (excludes transfer-ins)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Child Protection planning is timely, ensuring that the risks to children are discussed and responded to expediently.</i>	16	19	15	32	13	40	14	→ 0%	▲	27	50	34	33	40				Performance has been stable for the past two months, at a level around 10% lower than statistical neighbour average. Meeting has taken place with QA Unit and relevant service managers, which appears to have impacted upon performance. Performance can be affected by capacity in teams and again will need to be monitored carefully.
CP3-QL	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescales (based on count of children)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Child Protection planning is timely, ensuring that the risks to children are discussed and responded to expediently.</i>	73%	79%	35%	57%	27%	71%	70%	↑ 15%	▲	66%	94%	81%	78%	76%				Performance has been stable for the past two months, at a level around 10% lower than statistical neighbour average. Meeting has taken place with QA Unit and relevant service managers, which appears to have impacted upon performance. Performance can be affected by capacity in teams and again will need to be monitored carefully.
CP8-QL	Percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan seen in the last 15 working days.	Phil Bullingham	Sarah Ward	<i>The service is in regular contact with children subject to Child Protection planning to ensure that there is ongoing assessment of risk and opportunities to intervene effectively.</i>	85%	62%	85%	92%	87%	88%	89%	↑ 10%	▲	76%	92%	Local	Local	Local				This has improved since last year as caseloads have reduced since early 2020. However, they remain fairly static currently as caseloads are fairly consistently in their mid twenties now and additional management support is not yet in the teams. This should improve if additional management is in the team as more dip sampling of recordings and support to workers can take place, but caseloads need to be reduced to see further improvements. This is an ongoing area of work though and there are cases where the children are unable to be visited as they are aboard, in hospital etc with a small proportion each week who have not engaged.
CP5-QL (val)	Number of new Child Protection Plans (CPP) where child had previously been subject of a CPP at any time (repeat)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>The service is effective in managing the risks experienced by children and within families and where there is re-referral the issues are understood.</i>	2	13	14	17	11	19	0	↓ -100%	▼	10	19	9	8	11				After a notably high % of repeat CPP in January there were no cases in February. As a result of January performance an audit was undertaken of relevant cases and the findings will be shared with the management team after review by the CP Advisor.
CP5-QL	Percentage of new Child Protection Plans (CPP) where child had previously been subject of a CPP at any time (repeat)	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>The service is effective in managing the risks experienced by children and within families and where there is re-referral the issues are understood.</i>	12%	41%	37%	30%	24%	36%	0%	↓ -100%	▼	23%	41%	24%	22%	23%				After a notably high percentage of repeat child protection plans (CPP) in January, there were no cases in February. As a result of January performance an audit was undertaken of relevant cases and the findings will be shared with the management team after review by the CP Advisor.
CP9	Number of children subject to Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs) in the month	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	<i>Where children are subject to Child Protection planning, their cases are reviewed regularly to identify progress and any barriers.</i>	73	123	112	86	70	115	95	↓ -11%	▼	99	135	Local	Local	Local				A 17% reduction in review conferences, which will be explained in part by the half term holiday. The number of plans ending has shown an increasing trend over the quarter, with the likelihood that the new panel is contributing to case progression.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):	
CP7	Number of ceasing Child Protection Plans (CPP), excluding temporary registrations	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	Where it is assessed that risks to a child have reduced there is a review of risk and the case is stepped down effectively.	25	53	42	47	37	54	61	↑ 49%	▲	44	63								A 17% reduction in review conferences, which will be explained in part by the half term holiday. The number of plans ending has shown an increasing trend over the quarter, with the likelihood that the new panel is contributing to case progression.
LAC1	Number of Looked after Children at end of period	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Where it is assessed that there is no safe alternative, the local authority will take children into its care for their welfare and protection.	493	485	492	503	499	508	507	→ 5%	▼	496	512	496	527	550	515	495	420		A reduction of just one person in the number of children in case in the past month, going from 508 in January to 507 at the end of February, this remains towards the top end of the range for this indicator in the past year and is 5% higher than it was at the same time last year. The monthly average of 496 is on a par with our stat neighbours and well below national and regional comparators.
LAC1-NI	Looked after Children rate per 10,000	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	The level of children in care is at a level that is comparable with other local authorities like Southampton.	97	95	97	99	98	100	100	→ 5%	▼	98	101	89	67	53					With a difference of just 1 child since end of previous month, the rate remains at 100 per 10,000 population.
LAC2	Number of new Looked after Children (episodes)	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Where children meet the threshold and there are no alternatives, they will be safe and have their welfare needs addressed through accommodation by the local authority.	9	8	23	25	11	23	13	↑ 30%	▼	15	29	47	44	46					At 13 in February, the number of new LAC episodes has seen a 43% drop from the 23 who came in to our care in January, this is below the monthly average of 15 and remains significantly lower than our comparators.
LAC3	Number of ceasing Looked after Children (episodes)	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Children will leave care in a planned way with clear networks of support around them.	24	17	16	14	12	14	21	→ 0%	▲	13	24	16	16	19					14 children left our care in January and that has risen by 50% to 21 children ceasing to be in our care in February. Whilst some will have turned 18 and become care leavers, the courts have been catching up with Covid delays so adoptions, special guardianships and discharges of Care Orders will account for the rest.
LAC6 (val)	Number of adoptions (E11, E12)	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Children who are being adopted will receive timely and effective support.	4	4	4	1	4	1	10	↑ 150%	▲	3	10				50				'As noted last month, the court is sitting one session every other month to hear adoption applications. As expected, we had a number of applications, for which hearings took place on 9th of February, with the outcome being the large number this month.
LAC6 (%)	Percentage of adoptions (E11, E12)	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Children who are being adopted will receive timely and effective support.	17%	24%	25%	7%	33%	7%	48%	↑ 150%		17%	48%								48% of children leaving care this month was as a result of adoption orders being granted. That is because of the 10 adoption order made this month, which is more than the average.
LAC12 (val)	Number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) (E43, E44)	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Children subject to Special Guardianship Orders will receive timely and effective support.	6	4	4	4	1	5	1	↓ -67%		2	6	Local	Local	Local					There has been a slight lull in Special Guardianship (SGO) orders granted this month. As with adoption hearings, the pandemic continues to have an impact on when SGO cases can be heard, which, consequently, shows on this measure.
LAC12 (%)	Percentage of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) (E43, E44)	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Children subject to Special Guardianship Orders will receive timely and effective support.	25%	24%	25%	29%	8%	36%	5%	↓ -67%		15%	36%	1%	1%	1%					5% of children leaving care this month was as a result of orders being granted.
LAC7-QL	Percentage of Looked after Children visited within timescales	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	The service is in regular contact with Looked after Children to ensure that there is ongoing assessment of risk and opportunities to intervene effectively.	73%	70%	80%	75%	85%	84%	90%	↑ 21%	▲	72%	90%	Local	Local	Local					As predicted last month our continued work with Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and the data team to ensure we have correct visiting frequencies in place is paying off as visits have increased from 84% being on time in January to 90% on time in February, this is the highest it has been for the last year.

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LAC10 (%)	Percentage of Looked after Children with an authorised CLA plan	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Children have good quality care plans, to which they have contributed, and which meet their needs.	96%	96%	98%	97%	97%	96%	94%	→ 1%	▲	96%	98%	Local	Local	Local				There has been a further 2% decrease in February to 94% of our looked after children having an authorised care plan, so whilst performance remains high for this indicator we will need to review the data behind this indicator to try to understand why it has dropped again .
LAC10-QL	Number of Looked after Children with an authorised CLA Plan	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Children have good quality care plans, to which they have contributed, and which meet their needs.	473	467	480	486	482	489	477	→ 5%	▲	475	489	Local	Local	Local				See above.
LAC13	Number of current Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) looked after at end of period	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are identified and supported by the local authority.	11	10	11	16	18	21	21	↑ 40%		14	21	25	21	35				No change from January to February as we continue to have 21 UASC in our care, this is on a parr with national data but lower than our stat neighbours at 25 and significantly lower than the SE regional data at 35.
LAC14	Number of new unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are identified and supported by the local authority.	0	0	1	3	2	3	1	→ 0%		1	3	Local	Local	Local				Just 1 new UASC came in to our care in February which has been the average for the past year.
LAC11-QL	Number of Looked after Children aged 16+ or open Care Leavers with an authorised Pathway Plan	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Care Leavers have a good quality Pathway Plans, to which they have contributed, and which meets their needs.	171	178	173	176	179	177	179	↑ 13%	▲	172	179	Local	Local	Local				At 179 young people with an authorised Pathway Plan, February performance for this indicator has returned to the maximum for the year previously achieved in December 2020, this is a 13% increase on the same time last year.
LAC11-QL (%)	Percentage of Looked after Children aged 16+ or open Care Leavers with an authorised Pathway Plan	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Care Leavers have a good quality Pathway Plans, to which they have contributed, and which meets their needs.	94%	96%	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%	→ 4%	▲	96%	98%	Local	Local	Local				No change again, performance remains at 97% for the third consecutive month.
NI147	Percentage of Care Leavers in contact and in suitable accommodation	Julian Watkins	Mary Hardy	Care Leavers are in accommodation that is safe and secure.	84%	85%	85%	85%	83%	82%	84%	→ 1%	▲	84%	86%	85%	94%	91%	92.0%	93.0%	94%	February has seen a 2% increase to 84% of our care leavers being in contact and in suitable accommodation which is the monthly average for the past year. Operational demands have prevented our intended analysis of this data for this month's commentary but we will prioritise it for next month in order to better understand why we are not making more progress against this indicator .
LAC9 (val)	Number of Looked after Children (LAC) placed with IFAs at end of period	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Our Looked after Children will benefit from high quality fostering provision, with our own carers wherever possible.	142	140	143	150	150	156	160	↑ 10%	▼	146	160	Local	Local	Local	112	TBC	TBC	Our use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers has increased this month with the rise in the number of children looked after and our in house provision being at high capacity.
LAC9	Percentage of IFA placements (of all looked after children)	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Our Looked after Children will benefit from high quality fostering provision, with our own carers wherever possible.	29%	29%	29%	30%	30%	31%	32%	→ 5%	▼	29%	32%	Local	Local	Local				As above the increase in the number of children looked after has lead to a 1% rise in our use of external provision.
LAC16	Number of in-house foster carers at the end of period	Julian Watkins	Martin Smith	Our Looked after Children will benefit from high quality fostering provision, with our own carers wherever possible.	161	161	160	159	153	152	153	→ -9%	▲	161	168	Local	Local	Local	190	190	200	As expected we are now beginning to see our cohort of foster carers level out. Our loss of foster carers is exceeding the gains, with a net loss of 9 in Q1-3. Reasons for resignations are known and mainly relate to retirement, personal circumstances or adopting their foster children. The recruitment strategy for 2020-23 is in place and staffing resources have been requested in order to implement the strategy and recruit more foster carers. We now provide a quarterly fostering recruitment report.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):
EH1a	Number of Early Help Assessment (EHA) started in the month	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Children and families benefit from an early help offer that is rooted in a good understanding of their needs.	132	124	124	127	112	117	125	➔ 2%		114	139	Local	Local	Local				
EH1c	Number of Early Help Assessment (EHA) completed in the month INCLUDING adults aged 21+	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Assessments are completed for adult family members where a need for support is identified.	263	250	308	265	221	223	352	↑ 57%		255	352	Local	Local	Local	288	336	TBC	Number of assessments completed is significantly higher (58% increase from last month) than rolling monthly average. This reflects the impact of the capacity plan within the EH localities teams to mitigate the uplift in referrals pre lockdown.
EH1b	Number of Early Help Plans (EHPs) opened in the month (includes EHPs completed, and those still open at end of period)	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Children and families benefit from early help plans that meet their presenting needs.	280	252	338	275	208	197	376	↑ 104%		262	376	Local	Local	Local				The rate of EHP's is significantly higher (91% change from last month) than the rolling monthly average. Teams continue to focus on timeliness standards and case closures to support families self reliance and case throughput. EH locality case holding (Snr FSW) service capacity has been interimly increased to support swift allocation of new cases & avoid waiting lists (15 -20 families per SFSW pro rata & adjusted for named staff with parenting hub course delivery). Outcome Star no longer mandated tool as part of EHA.
EH14b	Number of Early Help Assessment (EHA) completed, EXCLUDING adults aged 21+	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Assessments are completed for a children where a need for early help support is identified..	177	175	204	183	159	164	231	↑ 39%		175	231	-	-	-				The rate of completed EHA's is above (41% change from last month) the rolling monthly average. Early Help Assessments are undertaken holistically with a child 'lived experience' focus and within the Locality EH teams the Outcome Star tool is used with individual children (age appropriate) to support engagement and strength based practice.
CIN5	Number of all Children in Need (CiN) (including Child Protection (CP) / Looked after Children (LAC) / Care Leavers	Phil Bullingham	Stuart Webb	Children and families receive support safely, at the right threshold and in a timely manner; supported by the interface between Early Help and Social Care.	2256	2250	2301	2367	2247	2193	2101	↓ -14%		2290	2367	Local	Local	Local				Further reduction, now showing a trend over four months and a decrease of 10%. Further reduction of statutory work will be achieved through service redesign and the Destination 22 programme.
LSCB17a	Percentage of 16-17 year olds NEET or whose activity is not known	Derek Willes	Debbie Blythe	Young people benefit from an effective work to engage them in education, training and employment.	tbc	tbc	tbc	0	0	0	0	- n/a	▼	0	0	-	-	-				
YO2	Number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 10-17 year olds in period	Phil Bullingham	Debbie Blythe	Young people are appropriately diverted from entry into the criminal justice system through the local diversion / prevention offer.	tbc	tbc	tbc	0	0	0	0	- n/a	▼	0	0	417	327	256				
FM011	Families attached per quarter	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Families benefit from a robust local Troubled Families offer. (Families Matter)	28	34	36	22	23			- n/a	▲	32	44	-	-	-				Our attachment target is 223 families to be worked with (discreet target for 2020/21). The revised attachment target has been achieved in QTR 1 through existing attachments over and above the previous target (2775 above 2230). Approximately 40 additional families need to be attached per month to realise the PbR target based upon a 40% conversion rate.

Ref.	Indicator	Owner	Reporter	Outcome (what impact will monitoring these measures have on the experiences of our children)	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	% change from Feb-20	DoT	12-mnth avg	12-mnth max.	SN	ENG	SE region	Target 17-18	Target 18-19	Target 19-20	Commentary (Feb-21):
FM012	Payment per result (PBR) claims attached per quarter	Phil Bullingham	Sean Holehouse	Family engagement in the Families Matter programme translates into PBR, for further investment into the programme.		51						- n/a	▲	43	51	-	-	-				147 successfully worked with families (PbR certified claims) for QTR 1, 2 & 3 (60 in Qtr 3). This is a reduction on last year's quarterly average of ~100 with evidence of C-19 impacted regression on families FM outcomes (DV, worklessness, school attendance). The targets for 2020/21 have been revised to account for the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency & an adaptation made on school attendance made for QTR 2 & 3. Staff continue to work with any family requiring support. Remedial plan developed with additional staff resource secured to uplift PbR performance for Qtr 4 to meet >75% by year end & 100% of next year's target.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES GLOSSARY

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Abuse

Abuse is the act of violation of an individual's human or civil rights. Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Different types of abuse include: Physical abuse, Neglect/acts of omission, Financial/material abuse, Psychological abuse, Sexual abuse, Institutional abuse, Discriminatory abuse, or any combination of these.

Advocacy

Advocacy helps to safeguard children and young people, and protect them from harm and neglect. It is about speaking up for children and young people and ensuring their views and wishes are heard and acted upon by decision-makers. LAs have a duty under The Children Act to ensure that advocacy services are provided for children, young people and care leavers making or intending to make a complaint. It should also cover representations which are not complaints. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) should also provide a child/young person with information about advocacy services and offer help in obtaining an advocate.

Agency Decision Maker

The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) is the person within a fostering service and an adoption agency who makes decisions on the basis of recommendations made by the Fostering Panel (in relation to a fostering service) and the Adoption Panel (in relation to an adoption agency). The Agency Decision Maker will take account of the Panel's recommendation before proceeding to make a decision. The Agency Decision Maker can choose to make a different decision.

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011 provide that the Agency Decision Maker for a fostering service should be a senior person within the fostering service, who is a social worker with at least 3 years post-qualifying experience in childcare social work and has knowledge of childcare law and practice (Standard 23).

The National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2011 provide that the Agency Decision Maker for an adoption agency should be a senior person within the adoption agency, who is a social worker with at least 3 years post-qualifying experience in childcare social work and has knowledge of permanency planning for children, adoption and childcare law and practice. Where the adoption agency provides an inter country adoption service, the Agency Decision Maker should also have specialist knowledge of this area of law and practice. When determining the disclosure of Protected Information about adults, the Agency Decision Maker should also understand the legislation surrounding access to and disclosure of information and the impact of reunion on all parties (Standard 23).

Assessment

Assessments are undertaken to determine the needs of individual children; what services to provide and action to take. They may be carried out:

- To gather important information about a child and family;
- To analyse their needs and/or the nature and level of any risk and harm being suffered by the child;
- To decide whether the child is a Child in Need (Section 17) and/or is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm (Section 47); and
- To provide support to address those needs to improve the child's outcomes to make them safe.

With effect from 15 April 2013, Working Together 2013 removes the requirement for separate **Initial Assessments** and **Core Assessments**. One Assessment – often called Single Assessment - may be undertaken instead.

CAFCASS

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) is the Government agency responsible for Reporting Officers, Children's Guardians and other Court officers appointed by the Court in Court Proceedings involving children. Also appoints an officer to witness when a parent wishes to consent to a child's placement for adoption.

Care Order

A Care Order can be made in Care Proceedings brought under section 31 of the Children Act if the Threshold Criteria are met. The Order grants Parental Responsibility for the child to the local authority specified in the Order, to be shared with the parents.

A **Care Order** lasts until the child is 18 unless discharged earlier. An **Adoption Order** automatically discharges the Care Order. A **Placement Order** automatically suspends the Care Order, but it will be reinstated if the Placement Order is subsequently revoked.

All children who are the subject of a Care Order come within the definition of Looked After and have to have a Care Plan. When making a Care Order, the Court must be satisfied that the Care Plan is suitable.

Categories of Abuse or Neglect

Where a decision is made that a child requires a Child Protection Plan, the category of abuse or neglect must be specified by the Child Protection Conference Chair.

Child in Need and Child in Need Plan

Under Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989, a child is a Child in Need (CiN) if:

- He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority;
- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or
- He/she is disabled.

A **Child in Need Plan** should be drawn up for children who are not Looked After but are identified as Children in Need who requiring services to meet their needs. It should be completed following an Assessment where services are identified as necessary.

Under the Integrated Children's System, if a Child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, it is recorded as part of the Child in Need Plan.

The Child in Need Plan may also be used with children receiving short break care in conjunction with Part One of the Care Plan.

Child Protection

The following definition is taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, paragraph 1.23.:

Child protection is a part of Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, Significant Harm.

Child Protection Conference

Child Protection Conferences (Initial – **ICPC** and review – **RCPC**) are convened where children are considered to be at risk of Significant Harm.

Children's Centres

The government is establishing a network of children's centres, providing good quality childcare integrated with early learning, family support, health services, and support for parents wanting to return to work or training.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Corporate Parenting

In broad terms, as the corporate parent of looked after children, a local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parent would provide for their own children.

Criteria for Child Protection Plans

Where a decision is made that a child requires a Child Protection Plan, the Conference Chair must ensure that the criteria for the decision are met, i.e. that the child is at continuing risk of Significant Harm.

Director of Children's Services (DCS)

Every top tier local authority in England must appoint a Director of Children's Services under section 18 of the Children Act 2004. Directors are responsible for discharging local authority functions that relate to children in respect of education, social services and children leaving care. They are also responsible for discharging functions delegated to the local authority by any NHS body that relate to children, as well as some new functions conferred on authorities by the Act, such as the duty to safeguard and protect children, the Children and Young People's Plan, and the duty to co-operate to promote well-being.

Designated Teacher

Schools should all appoint a Designated Teacher. This person's role is to co-ordinate policies, procedures and roles in relation to Child Protection and in relation to Looked After Children.

Discretionary Leave to Remain

This is a limited permission granted to an Asylum Seeker, to stay in the UK for 3 years - it can then be extended or permission can then be sought to settle permanently.

Duty of Care

In relation to workers in the social care sector, their duty of care is defined by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) as a legal obligation to:

- Always act in the best interest of individuals and others;

- Not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm;
- Act within your competence and not take on anything you do not believe you can safely do.

Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help;
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help;
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.

Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters is the approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19, which is incorporated into the Children Act 2004. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution and;
- Achieve economic well-being.

This means that the organisations involved with providing services to children are teaming up, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

Health Assessment

Every Looked After Child (LAC or CLA) must have a Health Assessment soon after becoming Looked After, then at specified intervals, depending on the child's age.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)

When an Asylum Seeker is granted ILR, they have permission to settle in the UK permanently and can access mainstream services and benefits.

Independent Reviewing Officer

If a Local Authority is looking after a child (whether or not the child is in their care), it must appoint an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for that child's case.

From 1 April 2011, the role of the IRO is extended, and there are two separate aspects: chairing a child's Looked After Review, and monitoring a child's case on an ongoing basis. As part of the monitoring function, the IRO also has a duty to identify any areas of poor practice, including general concerns around service delivery (not just around individual children).

IROs must be qualified social workers and, whilst they can be employees of the local authority, they must not have line management responsibility for the child's case. Independent Reviewing Officers who chair Adoption Reviews must have relevant experience of adoption work.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA) are specialist caseworkers who focus on working predominantly with high risk victims (usually but not exclusively with female victims). They generally are involved from the point of crisis and offer intensive short to medium term support. They work in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies and mobilise multiple resources on behalf of victims by coordinating the response of a wide range of agencies, including those working with perpetrators or children. There may be differences about how the IDVA service is delivered in local areas.

Initial Child Protection Conference

An Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) is normally convened at the end of a Section 47 Enquiry when the child is assessed as either having suffered Significant Harm or to be at risk of suffering ongoing significant harm.

The Initial Child Protection Conference must be held within 15 working days of the Strategy Discussion, or the last strategy discussion if more than one has been held.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

A designated officer (or sometimes a team of officers), who is involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children.

Their role is to give advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations; liaise with the Police and other agencies, and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. The Police should also identify an officer to fill a similar role.

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)

LSCBs have to be established by every local authority as detailed in Section 13 of The Children Act 2004. They are made up of representatives from a range of public agencies with a common interest and with duties and responsibilities to children in their area. LSCBs have a responsibility for ensuring effective inter-agency working together to safeguard and protect children in the area. The Boards have to ensure that clear local procedures are in place to inform and assist anyone interested or as part of their professional role where they have concerns about a child.

The functions of the LSCB are set out in chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

See <http://southamptonlscb.co.uk/> for Southampton LSCB.

Looked After Child

A Looked After Child is a child who is accommodated by the local authority, a child who is the subject to an Interim Care Order, full Care Order or Emergency Protection Order; or a child who is remanded by a court into local authority accommodation or Youth Detention Accommodation.

In addition where a child is placed for Adoption or the local authority is authorised to place a child for adoption - either through the making of a Placement Order or the giving of Parental Consent to Adoptive Placement - the child is a Looked After child.

Looked After Children may be placed with family members, foster carers (including relatives and friends), in Children's Homes, in Secure Accommodation or with prospective adopters.

With effect from 3 December 2012, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 amended the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to bring children who are remanded by a court to local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation into the definition of a Looked After Child for the purposes of the Children Act 1989.

Neglect

Neglect is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can occur during pregnancy, or once a child is born.

Parental Consent to Adoptive Placement

Parental consent to a child's placement for adoption under section 19 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 must be given before a child can be placed for adoption by an adoption agency, unless a Placement Order has been made or unless the child is a baby less than 6 weeks old and the parents have signed a written agreement with the local authority. Section 19 requires that the consent must be witnessed by a CAFCASS Officer. Where a baby of less than 6 weeks old is placed on the basis of a written agreement with the parents, steps must be taken to request CAFCASS to witness parental consent as soon as the child is 6 weeks old. At the same time as consent to an adoptive placement is given, a parent may also consent in advance to the child's adoption under section 20 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 either with any approved prospective adopters or with specific adopters identified in the Consent Form.

When giving advanced consent to adoption, the parents can also state that they do not wish to be informed when an adoption application is made in relation to the child.

Parental Responsibility

Parental Responsibility means all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which a parent has by law in relation to a child. Parental Responsibility diminishes as the child acquires sufficient understanding to make his or her own decisions.

A child's mother always holds Parental Responsibility, as does the father if married to the mother.

Unmarried fathers who are registered on the child's birth certificate as the child's father on or after 1 December 2003 also automatically acquire Parental Responsibility. Otherwise, they can acquire Parental Responsibility through a formal agreement with the child's mother or through obtaining a Parental Responsibility Order under Section 4 of the Children Act 1989.

Pathway Plan

The Pathway Plan sets out the route to the future for young people leaving the Looked After service and will state how their needs will be met in their path to independence. The plan will continue to be implemented and reviewed after they leave the looked after service at least until they are 21; and up to 25 if in education.

Permanence Plan

Permanence for a Looked After child means achieving, within a timescale which meets the child's needs, a permanent outcome which provides security and stability to the child throughout his or her childhood. It is, therefore, the best preparation for adulthood.

Wherever possible, permanence will be achieved through a return to the parents' care or a placement within the wider family but where this cannot be achieved within a time-scale appropriate to the child's needs, plans may be made for a permanent alternative family placement, which may include Adoption or by way of a Special Guardianship Order.

By the time of the second Looked After Review, the Care Plan for each Looked After Child must contain a plan for achieving permanence for the child within a timescale that is realistic, achievable and meets the child's needs.

Personal Education Plan

All Looked After Children must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which summarises the child's developmental and educational needs, short term targets, long term plans and aspirations and which contains or refers to the child's record of achievement. The child's social worker is responsible for coordinating and compiling the PEP, which should be incorporated into the child's Care Plan.

Person Posing a Risk to Children (PPRC)

This term replaced the term of 'Schedule One Offender', previously used to describe a person who had been convicted of an offence against a child listed in Schedule One of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

'Person Posing a Risk to Children' takes a wider view. Home Office Circular 16/2005 included a consolidated list of offences which agencies can use to identify those who may present a risk to children. The list includes both current and repealed offences, is for guidance only and is not exhaustive - subsequent legislation will also need to be taken into account when forming an assessment of whether a person poses a risk to children. The list of offences should operate as a trigger to further assessment/review to determine if an offender should be regarded as presenting a continued risk of harm to children. There will also be cases where individuals without a conviction or caution for one of these offences may pose a risk to children.

Placement at a Distance

Placement of a Looked After child outside the area of the responsible authority looking after the child and not within the area of any adjoining local authority.

This term was introduced with effect from 27 January 2014 by the Children's Homes and Looked after Children (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013.

Principal Social Worker - Children and Families

This role was borne out of Professor Munro's recommendations from the Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) to ensure that a senior manager in each local authority is directly involved in frontline services, advocate higher practice standards and develop organisational learning cultures, and to bridge the divide between management and the front line. It is typically held by a senior manager who also carries caseloads to ensure the authentic voice of practice is heard at decision-making tables.

Private Fostering

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent or close relative where the child is to be cared for in that home for 28 days or more. Close relative is defined as "a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent". A child who is Looked After by a local authority or placed in a children's home, hospital or school is excluded from the definition. In a private

fostering arrangement, the parent still holds Parental Responsibility and agrees the arrangement with the private foster carer.

A child in relation to whom the local authority receives notification from the prospective adopters that they intend to apply to the Court to adopt may have the status of a privately fostered child. The requirement to notify the local authority relates only to children who have not been placed for adoption by an adoption agency. On receiving the notification, the local authority for the area where the prospective adopters live becomes responsible for supervising the child's welfare pending the adoption and providing the Court with a report.

Public Law Outline

The Public Law Outline: Guide to Case Management in Public Law Proceedings came into force on the 6th April 2010. An updated Public Law Outline (PLO) came into effect on 22nd April 2014, alongside the statutory 26-week time-limit for completion of care and supervision proceedings under the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Public Law Outline sets out streamlined case management procedures for dealing with public law children's cases. The aim is to identify and focus on the key issues for the child, with the aim of making the best decisions for the child within the timetable set by the Court, and avoiding the need for unnecessary evidence or hearings.

Referral

The referring of concerns to local authority children's social care services, where the referrer believes or suspects that a child may be a Child in Need, including that he or she may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. The referral should be made in accordance with the agreed LSCB procedures.

Relevant Young People, Former Relevant, and Eligible

- **Relevant Young People** are those aged 16 or 17 who are no longer Looked After, having previously been in the category of Eligible Young People when Looked After. However, if after leaving the Looked After service, a young person returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be a Relevant Young Person. A young person is also Relevant if, having been looked after for three months or more, he or she is then detained after their 16th birthday either in hospital, remand centre, young offenders' institution or secure training centre. There is a duty to support relevant young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.
- **Former Relevant Young People** are aged 18 or above and have left care having been previously either Eligible, Relevant or both. There is a duty to consider the need to support these young people wherever they are living.
- **Eligible Young People** are young people aged 16 or 17 who have been Looked After for a period or periods totaling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and ending at least one day after their 16th birthday, and are still Looked After. (This total does not include a series of short-term placements of up to four weeks where the child has returned to the parent.) There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 18.

Review Child Protection Conference

Child Protection Review Conferences (RCPC) are convened in relation to children who are already subject to a Child Protection Plan. The purpose of the Review Conference is to review the safety, health and development of the child in view of the Child Protection Plan, to ensure that the child continues to

be adequately safeguarded and to consider whether the Child Protection Plan should continue or change or whether it can be discontinued.

Section 20

Under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, children may be accommodated by the local authority if they have no parent or are lost or abandoned or where their parents are not able to provide them with suitable accommodation and agree to the child being accommodated. A child who is accommodated under Section 20 becomes a Looked After Child.

Section 47 Enquiry

Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, if a child is taken into Police Protection, or is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order, or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Section 47 Enquiry is initiated. This enables the local authority to decide whether they need to take any further action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. This normally occurs after a Strategy Discussion.

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm.

Section 47 Enquiries are usually conducted by a social worker, jointly with the Police, and must be completed within 15 days of a Strategy Discussion. Where concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continued risk of Significant Harm, a Child Protection Conference should be convened.

Separated Children

Separated Children are children and young people aged under 18 who are outside their country of origin and separated from both parents, or their previous legal/customary primary caregiver. Some will be totally alone (**unaccompanied**), while others may be accompanied into the UK e.g. by an escort; or will present as staying with a person who may identify themselves as a stranger, a member of the family or a friend of the family.

Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is an order set out in the Children Act 1989, available from 30 December 2005. Special Guardianship offers a further option for children needing permanent care outside their birth family. It can offer greater security without absolute severance from the birth family as in adoption.

Special Guardianship will also provide an alternative for achieving permanence in families where adoption, for cultural or religious reasons, is not an option. Special Guardians will have Parental Responsibility for the child. A Special Guardianship Order made in relation to a Looked After Child will replace the Care Order and the Local Authority will no longer have Parental Responsibility.

Strategy Discussion

A Strategy Discussion is normally held following an Assessment which indicates that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer Significant Harm. The purpose of a Strategy Meeting is to determine whether there are grounds for a Section 47 Enquiry.

Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

From 1 September 2014, Statements of Special Educational Needs were replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans. (The legal test of when a child or young person requires an Education, Health and Care Plan remains the same as that for a Statement under the Education Act 1996).

Staying Put

A Staying Put arrangement is where a Former Relevant child, after ceasing to be Looked After, remains in the former foster home where they were placed immediately before they ceased to be Looked After, beyond the age of 18. The young person's first Looked After Review following his or her 16th birthday should consider whether a Staying Put arrangement should be an option.

It is the duty of the local authority to monitor the Staying Put arrangement and provide advice, assistance and support to the Former Relevant child and the former foster parent with a view to maintaining the Staying Put arrangement (this must include financial support), until the child reaches the age of 21 (unless the local authority consider that the Staying Put arrangement is not consistent with the child's welfare).

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker

A child or young person under the age of 18 who has been forced or compelled to leave their home country as a result of major conflict resulting in social breakdown or to escape human rights abuse. They will have no adult in the UK exercising Parental Responsibility.

Virtual School Head

Section 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014 imposes upon local authorities a requirement to appoint an officer to promote the educational achievement of Looked After children - sometimes referred to as a 'Virtual School Head'.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Working Together to Safeguard Children is a Government publication which sets out detailed guidance about the role, function and composition of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), the roles and responsibilities of their member agencies in safeguarding children within their areas and the actions that should be taken where there are concerns that children have suffered or are at risk of suffering Significant Harm.

Young Offender Institution (YOI)

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is responsible for the commissioning and purchasing of all secure accommodation for under 18-year-olds ('juveniles'), whether sentenced or on remand. Young offender institutions (YOIs) are run by the Prison Service (except where contracted out) and cater for 15-20 year-olds, but within YOIs the Youth Justice Board has purchased discrete accommodation for juveniles where the regimes are specially designed to meet their needs. Juvenile units in YOIs are for 15-17 year-old boys and 17-year-old girls.

Youth Offending Service or Team

Youth Offending Service or Team (YOS or YOT) is the service which brings together staff from Children's Social care, the Police, Probation, Education and Health Authorities to work together to keep young people aged 10 to 17 out of custody. They are monitored and co-ordinated nationally by the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

Sources

Tri.x live online glossary: <http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/> - a free resource, available to all which provides up to date keyword definitions and details about national agencies and organisations.

Southampton Local Safeguarding Board <http://southamptonlscb.co.uk/>

DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS
DATE OF DECISION:	25 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR – LEGAL AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Deputy Chief Executive	
	Name:	Mike Harris	Tel: 023 8083 2882
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
This item enables the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	
	(i) That the Panel considers the responses to recommendations from previous meetings and provides feedback.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	To assist the Panel in assessing the impact and consequence of recommendations made at previous meetings.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	None.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	Appendix 1 of the report sets out the recommendations made at previous meetings of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel. It also contains summaries of any action taken in response to the recommendations.
4.	The progress status for each recommendation is indicated and if the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel confirms acceptance of the items marked as completed they will be removed from the list. In cases where action on the recommendation is outstanding or the Panel does not accept the matter has been adequately completed, it will be kept on the list and reported back to the next meeting. It will remain on the list until such time as the Panel accepts the recommendation as completed. Rejected recommendations will only be removed from the list after being reported to the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	

<u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u>	
5.	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
6.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
7.	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
8.	None
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
9.	None

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Monitoring Scrutiny Recommendations – 25 March 2021
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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.	None

Children and Families Scrutiny Panel

Scrutiny Monitoring – 25 March 2021

Date	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
01/10/20	Children's Services - Performance	1) That the planned threshold review is considered at a future meeting of the Panel.	The threshold review is underway. It is recommended that a date for presentation to panel is confirmed after end-March 2021	Recommend review in June 2021
01/10/20	Recruitment of In-House Foster Carers	1) That consideration be given to providing full time funding for the proposed specialist foster carers.	The funding for specialist foster carers sits within the overall fostering recruitment budget and therefore provides the service with the capacity to grow the specialist offer.	Recommend review in June 2021
		2) That examples of the feedback provided by enquirers who did not progress to become foster carers is circulated to the Panel.	Recommendation that this is rescheduled as part of a broader fostering discussion.	Recommend review in June 2021
11/02/21	Children's Services Vision and Strategy	1) That, at a future meeting of the Panel, analysis is presented identifying how many children's files, from a sample of cases, include the 'Southampton 5'- things we should see on every child's file as identified in the Practice Framework.	Southampton 5 and practice guidance documents were launched in the March 2021 practice week. The Service Practice Framework and Academy will launch in May 2021. The service recommends that there should be a further presentation on the quality of practice after October 21.	Recommend review in October 2021
		2) That the Executive Director gives consideration to how training for foster carers can be reflected in the development of the Workforce Academy.	The first academy steering group met on 23 rd February 2021. The Fostering and Adoption Service Manager is a member of the group and this will support the development of the foster carer strand of the academy.	Complete
		3) That members of the Scrutiny Panel are invited to the 9 March 2021 workshop / seminar on becoming a Child Friendly City.	Members of the Panel were invited to the workshop on 9 th March. The session was attended by over 50 colleagues and partners and the feedback will be used to inform the Children and Young People strategy and Child Friendly City developments.	Complete
11/02/21	Improvement Plan	1) That the Executive Director reflects on the use of the term 'things to do better' when referring to service areas, practice and outcomes that require improvement.	The term has been changed to 'Areas for Improvement'.	Complete

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