

Agenda

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Monday 25 November 2019**

Time: **10.15 am**

Place: **Committee Room 1 - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's
Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

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Agenda for the meeting of the Children and young people scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor Carole Gandy**
Vice-Chairperson **Councillor Diana Toynbee**

Councillor Paul Andrews
Councillor Kath Hey
Councillor Phillip Howells
Councillor Mike Jones
1 Vacancy - Herefordshire Independents

Co-optees **Pat Burbidge** **Education Representative - Archdiocese of Cardiff**
Andy James **Parent Governor Representative – SEND Sector**
Nicola Kinson **Parent Governor Representative – Primary Sector**

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence</p>	
2.	<p>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 16 September 2019.</p>	5 - 12
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Tuesday 19 November 2019. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i> councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</p>	
6.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Tuesday 19 November 2019. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:</i> councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</p>	
7.	<p>REVIEW OF BUDGET AND CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS FOR 2020/21 RELATING TO THE REMIT OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.</p> <p>To review the budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.</p>	13 - 94
8.	<p>UPDATE ON REDUCING THE NUMBER OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)</p> <p>To provide an update concerning efforts to reduce the number of looked after children (LAC)</p>	95 - 112
9.	<p>REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019 / 2020</p> <p>To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2019 / 2020.</p>	113 - 174

10. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

To review the attached work programme for 2019/20

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11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The committee is asked to note the date of the next meeting on 14 January 2020, 1.00 p.m.

Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Committee Room 1 - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Monday 16 September 2019 at 10.15 am

Present: Councillor Carole Gandy (chairperson)
Councillor Diana Toynbee (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Paul Andrews, John Hardwick, Kath Hey, Phillip Howells, Mike Jones

Co-optees: Pat Burbidge and Nicola Kinson

In attendance: Ewen Archibald, Chris Baird, Keith Barham, John Coleman, Gill Cox, Liz Elgar, Matthew Evans, Alison Naylor, DCI Jon Roberts, Amy Whiles

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Andy James and Sian Lines.

13. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor John Hardwick acted as the substitute for the Herefordshire Independent vacancy on the committee.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting on 15 July were agreed as a correct record.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The questions received from members of the public are attached at the appendix. There were no supplementary questions at the meeting.

17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no questions from members of the council.

18. ACCOMMODATION BASED SUPPORT SERVICE FOR CARE LEAVERS

The committee considered a report from the Senior Commissioning Officer (SCO) concerning pre decision scrutiny of an accommodation based support service for care leavers. The report was presented by the SCO who explained that the proposal represented a new type of service for care leavers with complex needs. It consisted of two sites, one which offered 24 hour care to care leavers with complex needs and a

second which offered a lighter touch approach for care leavers with a greater degree of independence. The age of the care leavers would range from 18 to 25 years however it was likely that the service would provide for care leavers between the ages of 19 – 22 and in some circumstances it was recognised that care leavers as young as 16 may need to access the service. The focus of the service was to move care leavers towards a greater level of independent living by supporting their wellbeing whilst providing skills to live independently. Partnership working was an important element of the new service and work would be undertaken to ensure that employment and educational opportunities were available to care leavers of the service. It was explained that during commissioning young people would be engaged who may benefit from service....

The committee made the principal points below in the debate that followed:

- The location of the accommodation was queried and whether it was situated in a residential area. *The Head of Strategic Housing and Wellbeing Commissioning (HSHWC) explained that it was located in a city centre location and was not in a predominantly residential area.*
- The number of care leavers currently placed outside of the county was queried and how the council ensured the suitability of accommodation. *The Head of Looked After Children (HLAC) explained that she would provide a response to query concerning the numbers of children out of county following the meeting. It was explained that the council sourced placements for care leavers through a regional framework; providers included on this framework were required to meet standards to ensure that accommodation was suitable. The council also undertook visits to out of county accommodation.*
- It was queried what visitors care leavers at the facility would be able to receive. *The HLAC explained that the house rules would be determined when the service had been commissioned but it was unlikely that overnight guests would be permitted. It was likely that the care leavers would be able to stay at locations away from the service on some nights.*
- More information was requested regarding the innovative approach of the new service and the positive responses it had received. *The SCO explained that 10 responses had been received from a soft market test from providers who were excited by the prospect of a new form of service. The HSHWC explained that there was a diverse market with a number of providers including charitable and voluntary organisations together with private operators. The commissioning would focus on providers' approaches to and management of risk. Providers would need to engender confidence that they were able to manage to potential risks posed by the service.*
- It was queried how challenging behaviour of care leavers would be addressed. *The HLAC explained that the behaviours of the care leavers would be dealt with on an individual basis and work would be undertaken with the young people to understand their issues and provide skills to manage their behaviours. The mix of care leavers in the facility would be monitored to attempt to reduce the likelihood of conflict. The HSHWC emphasised the need to appoint the right provider that should be equipped to manage potential issues in the service.*
- It was noted that the service would provide for a small number of care leavers with complex needs and it was queried what alternative arrangements also existed for this cohort. *The HLAC explained that in some cases the young people would remain with foster carers or access supported accommodation such as the supported housing for young people project (SHYPP). The HSHWC explained that work would be undertaken to develop the market including a possible local framework and dynamic purchasing system.*
- It was queried if the model could be replicated elsewhere if it was successful. *The Director of Children's Services (DCS) explained that the cabinet had asked children's services to develop the proposal in response to the high cost of out of county placements. The effectiveness of the service would be monitored.*

- It was queried whether there would be a back log or waiting list of care leavers to access the service due to the two year period that care leavers would be resident. *The HSHWC explained that the provider would be required to design a pathway to enable care leavers to pass through the service and become independent in two years. It was acknowledged that young people would not always spend two years in the service but the period was a 'ceiling' which providers would be required to meet. The HLAC explained that the need for facilities for care leavers was assessed by the 16+ team to ensure that there was suitable accommodation available. The 'light touch' flats would be available soon for young people to occupy*
- The reference in the report to flexibility in the resourcing of the service was queried. *The SCO explained that the provider would need to be responsive to the level of need of the care leavers in the service; the level of need would fluctuate. The HSHWC explained that the contract with the selected provider would need to incorporate a device to allow for such flexibility.*
- The role of partners in respect of the service was queried in particular the involvement of the health sector. *The HSHWC explained that it was important that the healthcare sector provided therapeutic services it was responsible for, to meet the needs of the care leavers in the service. To request that the provider undertook all health services would increase the costs of the service. The HLAC explained that the head of the child and adolescent mental health service would sit on the tender evaluation panel.*
- The committee asked when it would be able to undertake a site visit of the facility after it was completed but before occupation by care leavers. *The HSHWC explained that it would be completed by March 2020 when the committee would be to visit.*
- The proposal was viewed as an exciting project, which if successful could replicated in the future.

The Cabinet Member Children and Families spoke on the proposal and explained that the service offered an opportunity for care leavers with complex needs to be accommodated locally and was a positive and exciting project.

RESOLVED: That the committee:

- **supports the introduction of the accommodation based support service for care leavers;**
- **supports an ongoing review of the service to determine its effectiveness and possible replication in future; and**
- **requests that a site visit to the facility is arranged once completed.**

19. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2019 - 2020

The committee considered a report by the Cabinet Member Children and Families concerning the youth justice plan 2018/19. The Head of Service (HoS), West Mercia Youth Offending Service introduced the report and explained that there had been a decrease in the number of first time entrants in 2018/19, custody was only used once during 2018 and there had been a reduction in the reoffending cohort. The HoS was joined by DCI Jon Roberts who assisted in answering questions relating to youth justice on behalf of West Mercia Police.

The committee raised those comments below in the debate that followed:

- The reoffending rate had improved but it was still high in Herefordshire compared to West Mercia. There was some contradiction in the service user feedback which stated that 92% of individuals made better decisions. *The HoS explained that the rate in Herefordshire was better than the national average of 40% however it was recognised that within West Mercia the county's reoffending rate was higher than other areas. DCI Roberts explained that the joint review panel had been effective in identifying child at risk of criminality and diverting them from offending.*
- The first time entrants rate was raised and it was queried why Herefordshire as a rural county was not significantly outperforming urban areas in West Mercia. *The HoS explained that Herefordshire used to have the highest first time entrants rate in the West Mercia region but was now lower than the region as a whole.*
- It was requested that in future the plan contain an addendum with the latest statistics available for the measures.
- It was queried how the youth justice service worked with CAMHS. *The HoS explained that support was provided from psychologists from CAMHS who worked with staff in the team to provide advice on the handling of complex cases.*
- The success of the initiative to increase multi-agency assurance reporting as queried and whether there were any partners in particular that were difficult to engage. *The HoS explained that the assurance reporting had not been undertaken before the current year. It was confirmed that engagement in the high risk panels had improved.*
- The issue of delays to the processing of young people through the justice system was raised. *The HoS and DCI Roberts explained that there was a delay in those cases where young people had been released under investigation. This was a delay in the criminal justice process but this did not cause a delay in the youth justice process and consideration by the panel.*
- It was queried how the youth justice team was working with the early help at the council to prevent young people becoming involved in crime. *The HoS explained that work between the youth justice team and the early help team consisted of developing a pathway for young people whose siblings were involved in criminality. The timescale for the completion of this piece of work would be provided after the meeting. In addition the early help team sat on the youth justice panel and took referrals. DCI Roberts explained that diversionary activity was in place, such as the boxing club, which local agencies referred into.*
- The committee queried the prevalence of county lines activity in Herefordshire and the impact of the pre-court decision making arrangements on its incidence. *The HoS explained that the pre-court decision making arrangement sought to avoid the criminalisation of young people on the edge of county lines activity. DCI Roberts explained the multi-agency work that was in progress concerning child exploitation and outlined intelligence that was known regarding county lines activity in Herefordshire. It was confirmed that the police and crime commissioner was looking at resourcing work to counter county lines activity.*
- The resourcing of county lines activity was raised as a potential topic for general scrutiny to consider as part of its work programme.

The Cabinet Member Children and Families spoke on the youth justice plan and commented that the number of reduced first time entrants was positive. The intervention work undertaken to divert young people from criminality was encouraging and it was recognised that the campaign against county lines was challenging.

RESOLVED:

That the committee:

- **Endorses the Youth Justice Plan for presentation to full Council; and**

- **Asks that an addendum is added to the report, in forthcoming years, providing up-to-date statistics.**

20. WORK PROGRAMME 2019 - 2020

The committee considered a report containing its work programme 2019/20, the executive responses to task and finish groups conducted in the previous council term and terms of reference for task and finish groups proposed in 2019/20.

It was noted that the report concerning a review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20 was not presented to the current meeting and it was agreed that it would be brought to the next meeting of the committee on 25 November.

It was requested that a correction to the work programme was undertaken to change the title of the spotlight review to peer on peer abuse in schools and that a further spotlight review was added to the work programme concerning speech and language therapy.

The committee reviewed the executive responses to the task and finish groups conducted in the previous council term.

The committee considered and agreed the terms of reference for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review. It was agreed that Councillor Carole Gandy would act as chairperson of the review and the membership would include: the members of the committee; Councillor Peter Jinman and in accordance with the terms of reference any other member expressing an interest. As part of the review it was requested that an anonymous case study was presented concerning a case of peer on peer abuse that resulted in a successful prosecution. The committee also considered whether a victim of peer on peer abuse should be invited to the spotlight review to give evidence. This was not supported by the committee which had concerns regarding the potential trauma caused to such a witness appearing at a meeting in public to provide evidence and the potential implications on any current or future criminal proceedings.

The committee considered and agreed the terms of reference for the child exploitation task and finish group. It was agreed that Councillor Diana Toynbee would act as the chairperson of the group and the membership would include Councillors: Paul Andrews; Peter Jinman; Mike Jones; and David Summers. In accordance with the scoping document co-optees from voluntary/charitable organisations and a member from the general scrutiny committee would be sought.

RESOLVED: That the committee agrees:

- **the 2019/20 work programme subject to the correction and reallocation of the report above and notes the executive responses to the tasks and finish groups concerning SEND Provision, PRU Referrals and Court Judgements;**
- **the terms of reference for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review, the appointment of a chairperson and its membership as outlined above; and**
- **the terms of reference for the child exploitation task and finish group, the appointment of a chairperson and its membership as outlined above.**

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairperson

Appendix – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 16 September 2019

Agenda item no. 5 - Question from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Clements, Hereford	<p>Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is a national phenomenon. DfE guidance recognises that after sexual assault by a school peer, a victim is likely to suffer harm if their school does not take action to ensure they can attend school without risk of seeing their abuser.</p> <p>In several cases in Herefordshire since 2016 children have not been safeguarded appropriately in school after reporting a sexual assault to police; concerns have been raised that schools are continuing to fail victims.</p> <p>Under s.47 Children Act 1989 the Council has a duty to investigate and take action if they have <i>"reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives ... in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm"</i>.</p> <p>How long is a reasonable delay between the Council being alerted to possible safeguarding failure, and the Council starting an investigation?</p>	Chairperson of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response: Thank you for your question. The committee recognises that some parents across the country have raised their concerns about Peer on Peer abuse and this is why this committee has chosen this subject to scrutinise. The issue raised is relevant to the scoping document for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee under that item on the agenda.</p>			
PQ 2	Name and address supplied	<p>In 2018 a secondary school in Herefordshire paid compensation to settle claims made under the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act in connection with the failure to safeguard a student in school after she disclosed she was the victim of a serious sexual assault by a school peer.</p> <p>I am aware that other children in Herefordshire have also not been safeguarded appropriately after they report a sexual assault by a school peer to their school or to the police.</p> <p>Has the Committee seen evidence that the Council undertook a thorough investigation into the 2018 case in order to learn lessons, and that those lessons have been disseminated to schools to ensure that no other child suffers preventable harm after a sexual assault?</p>	Chairperson of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response: Thank you for your question. The committee recognises that some parents across the country have raised their concerns about Peer on Peer abuse and this is why this committee has chosen this subject to scrutinise. The issue raised is relevant to the scoping document for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee under that item on the agenda.</p>			



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Monday 25 November 2019
Title of report:	Review of budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Report by:	Leader of the council

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To seek the views of the children and young people scrutiny committee on the budget proposals for 2020/21 and on the draft corporate plan as they relate to the remit of the committee.

The draft proposals show an overall increase of £3.5m in the proposed base revenue budget for children and families, this includes funding cost pressures related to looked after children and funding new initiatives in providing services to the edge of care and improving social care services.

The proposed budget follows a base budget exercise reviewing the expected service demand. Savings of £0.3m will be required in 2020/21 to deliver a balanced budget.

Two capital projects totalling £6.5m are recommended for consideration, being additional funding of £5.4m towards investment at Peterchurch Primary School and additional funding of £1.2m for investment at Brookfield school.

The committee is invited to make recommendations to inform and support the process for making cabinet proposals to Council regarding the adoption of the budget and associated budget framework items, including providing constructive challenge to the cabinet's proposals.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the committee determine any recommendation it wishes to make to Cabinet in relation to the 2020/21 budget and corporate plan proposals specifically affecting children and young people, the draft:
- a. corporate plan at appendix 1;
 - b. revenue budget at appendix 2; and
 - c. capital investment budget at appendix 4.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternatives to the recommendations; Cabinet is responsible for developing budget proposals and a draft corporate plan for council consideration and it is a function of this committee to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive. The council's budget and policy framework rules require Cabinet to consult with scrutiny committees on budget proposals in order that the scrutiny committee members may inform and support the process for making Cabinet proposals to Council.
2. It is open to the committee to recommend alternative spending proposals or strategic priorities; however given the legal requirement to set a balanced budget should additional expenditure be proposed compensatory savings proposals must also be identified.

Key considerations

3. Every four years, Herefordshire Council develops a corporate plan which sets out the council's ambition and priorities. The three key themes within the proposed corporate plan attached at appendix 1 are:
 - Community - Build communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together
 - Economy - Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources
 - Environment - Protect our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live
4. Herefordshire Council completed its first round of informal consultation on the draft new four year corporate plan covering the period 2020-2024 during September and October. More than 1,500 people provided feedback on the priorities for the county. This supports the policy and investment priorities for Herefordshire and sets the scene for a more detailed consultation on the 2020/21 budget proposals throughout November.
5. The budget proposals support the key themes and aim to manage increasing demand for formal social care services by supporting people and families to lead healthy and independent lives within their own communities by continuing to invest in preventative support local to where people live.
6. The council has invested in children's social care over a period from May 2018. This has resulted in increasing management capacity, team manager capacity and have an

additional team manager in both the assessment and children protection court teams. There are now additional family support workers to provide capacity and take some tasks from social workers. The council is actively recruiting social workers and are part of a regional approach to this.

7. There has been an increase in business support capacity to increase the availability of business support for convening and minuting of meetings therefore releasing social work time from these tasks; the council has also appointed a case progression officer to add additional capacity to ensuring improvement in care planning, timeliness and outcomes for children. Otter software, which is voice recognition software to enable social workers to spend less time on recording casework has been introduced. There has also been an increased investment in early help family support workers to enable more preventative work to take place.
8. Social work practice has benefited from investment in strengthening legal services dedicated to children's safeguarding. The council has also reduced reliance on agency social workers in a number of areas but remain reliant on their work in some of our teams and challenges remain in some parts of the service. The focus remains on retaining existing staff and the council has improved remuneration and training offer (informed by suggestions from staff themselves) to support this. There is now a permanent management team at head of services and team manager level. This is the first time for a number of years that this has been achieved and should enable a consistent focus on practice and decision making.
9. Ofsted highlighted, in the focused visit in January 2019, that performance management information was beginning to support some key areas of improvement in key areas of practice; and acknowledge that whilst further work is required to improve the accuracy of performance information, that management grip and understanding of the service has significantly improved. Individual service area action plans and performance are reviewed monthly at the assistant director/head of service meeting, at the directorate senior management team meetings and feed into cabinet and children and families scrutiny meetings on performance.
10. The children and families scrutiny committee reviews performance against the improvement plan on a quarterly basis. Monthly performance challenge sessions which include the chief executive, leader of the council, lead member, group leaders and the chair and vice chair of children's wellbeing scrutiny committee consider both quantitative and qualitative information. This provides a challenging dialogue to inform priorities and drive improvement.
11. The Children's Integrated Needs Assessment (ChINA) and the Oral Health Needs Assessment have both highlighted the importance of action to address the relatively high levels of tooth decay and obesity of Herefordshire children. Work is being taken forward to increase the number of children accessing fluoride varnish and enabling targeted, supervised tooth brushing as well as encouraging parents to take their child to the dentist.
12. The committee is invited to comment on the draft corporate plan proposed specifically in reference to children and young people.
13. The proposals provide a balanced budget and include a 4% total increase in council tax, a 3% pay settlement, 200 additional new homes above the assumed growth in new homes and the central government 2019 spending review announcement.

14. The proposed 2020/21 revenue budget is based on an assumed total council tax increase of 4%, 2% increase in core council tax and a 2% adult social care precept. This increases the band D equivalent charge to £1,575.29 representing an increase of £1.17 per week.
15. The 2% adult social precept will generate additional income of £2m, this income is ring-fenced to fund the proposed 2020/21 adult and communities base budget.
16. Council will be asked to approve the 2020/21 budget on 14 February 2020; this will follow confirmation of the final financial settlement for 2020/21 which is expected to follow the general election on 12 December. Council will also be asked to approve the updated medium term financial strategy (MTFS), treasury management strategy and the capital strategy.
17. If central government announces additional funding to Herefordshire in the final settlement then Cabinet will aim to seek the views of the scrutiny committees as to the best way of deploying the extra funding.

Base budget proposed and savings plan

18. A base budget review has been completed ahead of proposing the draft 2020/21 budget, this review involved:-
 - Costing the service based on the current requirement of the service, not rolling over previous budgets.
 - Income budgets to reflect income receivable.
 - Pay budgets to reflect actual establishment, deleting vacant posts without budget or not planned to be filled.
 - Performance in 2019/20
 - Projected population pressures
 - 2019/20 policy changes
 - Scorecard target attainment
 - Building in a staffing vacancy factor, assuming there isn't full establishment for the full year.
19. The budget proposal also includes additional funding towards new initiatives in early support and improved support service to those families in need. The proposed budget is shown below.

19/20 revised base £k	Savings £k	Looked after children £k	Edge of care £k	Improving social care services £k	Inflation pressures £k	Total £k
27,185	(300)	1,100	1,000	1,000	714	30,699

20. The proposed additional looked after children budget will fund placement costs of both looked after children and costs associated with corporate parenting role of care leavers. The budget position will continue to be closely monitored to highlight quickly any need for remedial action if actual costs indicate a potential overspend. The proposed edge of care investment will be used to provide intensive support to enable children and families to

remain together when otherwise the child might enter into care. The funding will also be used to fund work with the child and family with the aim to reunite safely if a child does enter care. The proposed investment in improving the quality of social care services for vulnerable children and young people will provide additional capacity to frontline teams, court work and quality assurance.

21. The savings requirement for children and families for 2020/21 remains as set out in the 2019/20 medium term financial strategy (MTFS), at £0.3m to be achieved managing inflation and securing contract efficiencies.
22. The proposed budget for 2020/21 is attached at appendix 2. The proposed till receipt as a result of the proposal is also attached at appendix 3. The base budget proposal shows the net budget position; the gross budget will include the dedicated school grant, improved better care fund and public health grant.

Financing

23. The 2020/21 net budget requirement is financed by retained funding from council tax (£109.4m) and business rates (£36.7m) as shown in the Appendix 2. Assumptions include a 4% increase in council tax (2% general increase and 2% adult social care precept) and business rate reliefs being funded via a central government grant. It reflects the delay in the roll out of business rate devolution into 2021/22. Central government funding is included as announced in the 2019 spending review which delays the impact of the fairer funding review into 2021/22.
24. The proposed budget is in line with the 2019 spending review announced in September however the general election on 12 December may change the final local government funding settlement from central government in 2020/21.
25. Central government confirmed the intended rolling-over of specific social care grants and a new spending power of £11bn grant for Adults and Children social care (inclusive of the adult care precept at 2%), £3.4m for Herefordshire.
26. If the final settlement provides additional monies to the draft base budget shown above, unless the use of those funds is specified by government, Cabinet will seek the views of the scrutiny committees as to the best way of deploying the extra funding. In the interim the funding will be allocated to reserves.

Capital Budget

27. Attached at appendix 4 is the proposed additional capital investment budget requests for children and families, totalling £6.5m. The two investment proposals are:-
 - Peterchurch Primary School £5.4m (total programme budget increasing to £10.9m). A replacement primary school for Peterchurch including all teaching and support spaces, including playground and playing field, necessary for it to function as a full one form entry school but with the provision of five classes initially. The facility will include for the provision of a nursery to accommodate the one currently on site and some work to the swimming pool to enable its continued use.
 - Brookfield School, £1.2m (increasing the total investment budget to £3.9m). Improvement project seeking to achieve; higher school buildings compliance with DfE building bulletin 104 for special educational needs settings, more robust fire evacuation buildings compliance, the release of a council owned split site facility

at Symonds Street, the capacity to deliver the full statutory curriculum, and improved accommodation for girls with social emotional mental health needs.

28. Capital investment proposals were reviewed informally by cabinet and the above two have progressed. It was felt the other two projects submitted that consisted of asbestos surveys and works (£0.5m) and works on boilers and heating in schools (£1.5m) should be managed within the annual schools maintenance grant, already in the approved programme. The business cases for all four projects are attached at appendix 5.

Budget setting timetable

29. Below is a summary of the 2020/21 budget setting timetable.

Date	Event	Purpose
6 November 2019	Public consultation	Four weeks of consultation with the public on the budget proposals
18 November 2019	Adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee	To consider adults and wellbeing revenue and capital budget proposals and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
25 November 2019	Children and young people scrutiny committee	To consider children and young people revenue and capital budget proposals and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
29 November 2019	General scrutiny committee	To consider the overall revenue and capital budget proposals and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
13 January 2020	Adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee	To consider the adults and wellbeing revenue and capital budget proposals following the conclusion of public consultation and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
14 January 2020	Children and young people scrutiny committee	To consider the children and young people revenue and capital budget proposals following the conclusion of public consultation and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
27 January 2020	General scrutiny committee	To consider the overall revenue and capital budget proposals following the conclusion of public consultation and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet
30 January 2020	Cabinet	To agree the draft revenue and capital budget 2020/21, treasury management strategy, capital strategy and medium term financial strategy for recommendation to Council
(9.30am) 14 February 2020	Council	Deadline for Members intending to propose an amended motion (as per Section 1 paragraph 4.1.105 and 4.1.106 of Constitution)
14 February 2020	Council	To agree the council's revenue and capital budget for 2019/20, treasury management strategy, capital strategy and medium term financial strategy

Community impact

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
 Josie Rushgrove, Tel: 01432 261867, email: jrushgrove@herefordshire.gov.uk

30. The budget proposals demonstrate how the council is using its financial resources to deliver the priorities within the proposed corporate plan.
31. The council is committed to delivering continued improvement, positive change and outcomes in delivering key priorities.
32. In accordance with the principles of the code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.

Equality duty

33. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
34. Service specific equality impact assessments will be completed for the service specific budget proposals to assess the impact on the protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The duty means that the potential impact of a decision on people with different protected characteristics is always taken into account when these assessments have been completed then we will consider mitigating against any adverse impact identified.

Resource implications

35. The financial implications are as set out in the report. The ongoing operational costs including, HR, IT and property resource requirements are included in the draft budget and will be detailed in separate governance decision reports as appropriate.

Legal implications

36. When setting the budget it is important that councillors are aware of the legal requirements and obligations. Councillors are required to act prudently when setting the budget and council tax so that they act in a way that considers local taxpayers. This also covers the impact on future taxpayers.
37. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires a council to set a balanced budget. To do this the council must prepare a budget that covers not only the expenditure but also the funding to meet the proposed budget. The budget has to be fully funded and the income from all sources must meet the expenditure.

38. Best estimates have to be employed so that all anticipated expenditure and resources are identified. If the budget includes unallocated savings or unidentified income then these have to be carefully handled to demonstrate that these do not create a deficit budget. An intention to set a deficit budget is not permitted under local government legislation.
39. The council must decide every year how much they are going to raise from council tax. The decision is based on a budget that sets out estimates of what is planned to be spent on services. Because the level of council tax is set before the year begins and cannot be increased during the year, risks and uncertainties have to be considered, that might force higher spending more on the services than planned. Allowance is made for these risks by: making prudent allowance in the estimates for services; and ensuring that there are adequate reserves to draw on if the service estimates turn out to be insufficient.
40. The council's budget and policy framework rules require that the chairmen of a scrutiny committee shall take steps to ensure that the relevant committee work programmes include any budget and policy framework plan or strategy, to enable scrutiny members to inform and support the process for making cabinet proposals to Council.
41. Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 restricting councillors voting on certain matters where they are in arrears of council tax, does not apply to scrutiny function as the views from scrutiny on the budget are not a recommendation for approval, a resolution or any other type of decision. As a result a s106 check of councillors arrears has not been undertaken.

Risk management

42. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report to Council when it is setting the budget and precept (council tax). Council is required to take this report into account when making its budget and precept decision. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
43. The budget has been updated using the best available information; current spending, anticipated pressures and the provisional settlement. This draft will be updated through the budget setting timetable.
44. The most substantial risks have been assessed as part of the budget process and reasonable mitigation has been made. Risks will be monitored through the year and reported to cabinet as part of the budget monitoring process.
45. There are additional risks to delivery of budgets including the delivery of new homes, Brexit, government policy changes following the general election and unplanned pressures. We are maintaining a general fund reserve balance above the minimum requirement and an annual contingency budget to manage these risks.
46. Demand management in social care continues to be a key issue, against a backdrop of a demographic of older people that is rising faster than the national average and some specific areas of inequalities amongst families and young people. Focusing public health commissioning and strategy on growth management through disease prevention and behaviour change in communities is critical for medium term change. In addition resetting our relationship with communities focussing services on areas of greatest professional need will support the MTFS.

Consultees

47. Initial consultation on the draft corporate plan has been completed. Views on headline priorities were collected via 6 'voting boxes'. Each participant was given 10 tokens to place in the 6 boxes according to their personal views and priorities. For those interested in commenting on sub-priorities a 'sticky dot' exercise was used which encouraged people to place a green sticky dot against those sub priorities with which they strongly agreed and a red sticky dot against those with which they strongly disagreed. Participants were also encouraged to leave comments or indicate 'missing' priorities on a comments sheet.
48. 1,056 people participated in the consultation at pop-up events the same exercise was replicated online and accessed via the Herefordshire Council website, in which an additional 358 residents responded.
49. Combined results from the tokens and survey monkey are shown below:-

Maintenance of roads and public spaces	3,827
Protect and enhance our environment	3,504
Start building new affordable council housing	2,683
More travel choices e.g. cycling, buses, community transport	2,661
Invest in job creation skills and training	2,582
Help people to help themselves e.g. advice, support, community projects	2,225

50. Out of the six draft priorities:

- Maintenance of roads and public spaces came out highest in terms of votes.
- Protect and enhance our environment was the 2nd most popular priority.
- The 3rd highest priority, 'Build our own sustainable council houses', is over 800 votes behind the 2nd ranked priority.
- 'Help people to help themselves' was the lowest priority, with over 350 votes behind the next priority.

51. The council's 2020/21 budget consultation is live until 4 December. Along with consulting on new initiatives the consultation includes similar questions to the 2019/20 budget consultation to gauge if the public opinion has changed over time.

52. The consultation is open to all, including parish councils, health partners, the schools forum, business ratepayers, council taxpayers, the trade unions, political groups on the council and the scrutiny committees. Meetings were specifically held with businesses, parish councils and representatives from the voluntary sector to promote the consultation and information was also sent to partner bodies.

Appendices

Appendix 1	draft corporate plan
Appendix 2	draft 2020/21 revenue budget

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Josie Rushgrove, Tel: 01432 261867, email: jrushgrove@herefordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 3	draft till receipt of 2020/21 budget proposal
Appendix 4	capital investment budget requests
Appendix 5	capital investment business cases
Appendix 6	committee presentation

Background papers

None identified

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.












“Respecting the past, shaping our future - we will help build vibrant **communities**, create a thriving local **economy** and protect and enhance our **environment**”.



Community









Build communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together

-  Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve
-  Help keep our families and communities healthy and independent
-  Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices
-  Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable adults
-  Join up health and social care services in communities
-  Create environments that make wellbeing inevitable
-  Use technology to enable independent living
-  Get the right mix of housing for our communities
-  Build our own sustainable council houses



Economy








Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources

-  Use council assets to create more jobs
-  Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment to our county
-  Invest in education and the skills needed by employers
-  Raise the average wage of people working in Herefordshire
-  Encourage younger people to build their lives here
-  Enhance digital connectivity for communities and business
-  Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to increase tourism and attract new businesses
-  Invest public money locally wherever possible



Environment

Protect our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live

-  Understand our carbon footprint and act to reduce it
-  Lead our transition to a low carbon economy
-  Improve and extend travel options throughout the county
-  Ensure the best use of the county's natural resources
-  Reduce waste and increase reuse, repair and recycling
-  Protect the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards
-  Address the climate emergency and support behaviour change of residents and businesses

Our principles

Partnership | We collaborate to maximise our strengths and resources

Sustainability | We use resources wisely so Herefordshire is preserved for future generations

Integrity | We make decisions based on evidence and work with respect, openness and accountability

Democracy | We strengthen local democracy, decision making and service delivery and involve more young people

Communication | We listen to and learn from our communities and help people connect through culture, creativity and care

Summary - budget proposals

Appendix 2

2020/21 revenue budget proposal

Directorate	19/20 revised base £k	Pressures £k	New Initiatives £k	Savings £k	Base Budget £k
Adults and Communities	53,965	2,717	200	(600)	56,282
Social care pool			2,054		2,054
Children and families	27,185	714	3,100	(300)	30,699
Economy and Place	27,594	1,364	1,070	(873)	29,155
Corporate Services	15,086	169	425	(77)	15,603
Total Directorate	123,830	4,964	6,849	(1,850)	133,793
Central	22,771	91	(56)	(500)	22,306
Total Net Budget	146,601	5,055	6,793	(2,350)	156,099
Funded by					
Council Tax					109,397
Retained Rates					36,726
Rural Sparsity Delivery Grant					5,101
Adult social care support grant					4,875
Totals					156,099

Proposed budget till receipt

	20-21		20-21
	£s		£s
** Daily life **		** Local government running costs **	
* Bin collections and Environment	13.87	* Election, governance and legal services	3.50
* Roads, bridges and care of public spaces	6.97	* Directors & Staff costs	0.56
* Schools and education	99.16	* Organisational administration	1.39
* Buses and community transport	5.97	* IT, Transactions and billing (Hoople)	5.25
* Libraries, records and customer services	1.22	* Insurance and property maintenance	4.84
** Looking after Adults **		* Capital finance - Debt repayment	6.97
* Older People in residential / nursing care	14.39	* Capital finance - Interest payments	9.57
* Older people supported at home	9.89	** Economic growth **	
* Disabled adults	28.92	* Economic development and regeneration	1.74
* Lifestyles services (substance abuse, sexual health)	2.84	* Broadband - rural rollout	0.15
* Health improvement (Public Health nursing, health checks, smoking cessation)	5.67	* Planning	0.35
* Housing	0.53		246.32
** Looking after children **		Income that supplements council tax	
* Child protection	4.29	* Investment Property income	(2.94)
* Children in care	14.97	* Car parking	(5.42)
* Children with special needs	3.31	* Capital finance - Interest received	(2.01)
		* Public Health grant	(7.70)
		* National Education funding	(96.98)
			131.27

Children and young people capital requests

Scheme	Current Capital Programme £000	Total 20/21 £000	Total 21/22 £000	Total 22/23 £000	Total Future Years £000	Capital Grant funding £000	Redirected funding £000	Capital receipt funding £000	Funded by ROI £000	Corporate Funded PB £000	Total Request £000
Brookfield School	2,744.0	0.0	1,195.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,195.0	0.0	0.0	1,195.0
Peterchurch Primary School	5,500.0	0.0	5,353.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,353.0	0.0	0.0	5,353.0
Total	8,244.0	0.0	6,548.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6,548.0	0.0	0.0	6,548.0

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

FEASIBILITY BUSINESS CASE

Peterchurch Primary - Replacement School

Release: Draft

Date: 20/09/2019

Author:

Document Number: v.1

Feasibility Business Case History

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Stage 0 Business Case

1. Purpose of Document

This Feasibility Business Case contains information that describes the justification for continuing the development of a detailed Business Case for a replacement primary school at Peterchurch. The Business Case is to be submitted to the Children & Families Capital Programme Board and if accepted, a more detailed Business Case will be developed.

2. Objectives

If the Business Case is approved then the project can move into the implementation phase and deliver the following:

- Ensure the council's estate is well maintained, safe and fit for purpose
- Reduce schools' revenue expenditure through more efficient buildings
- Extend the life cycle of the council's assets and protect / enhance their value
- Ensure that sufficient pupil places in suitable accommodation are available to meet demand in schools

The business case sets out the work required to replace the current primary school building at Peterchurch with new permanent build accommodation.

3. Background

Herefordshire Council is responsible for maintaining all community and voluntary controlled schools located within Herefordshire. This equates to 44 establishments on 45 sites. Optimisation of the schools estate is the subject of the schools capital investment strategy which seeks to ensure that there are sufficient high quality learning environments, in good condition, permanent structure buildings that are of the size set out in the Government building specifications. This project supports the Corporate Plan priorities of 'Keeping children safe and giving them a great start in life' and 'To secure better services, quality of life and value for money'.

Peterchurch Primary School is a small community primary school maintained by Herefordshire Council in the village of Peterchurch, in the centre of the Golden Valley west of Hereford towards the Black Mountains and Welsh border. The village is the largest settlement in the valley and has a number of amenities including the primary and secondary schools, village hall, fire /police station, shop, and two pubs.

The school is located on the main road (B4348) and comprises various ages and types of buildings. These include the original Victorian school and headmaster's house; a conversion of a former village hall, some under-sized modern accommodation and some modular buildings.

The current school accommodation is not fit for purpose both in regard to its suitability as set out in DfE Building Bulletin 103 "Area Guidelines for Schools" and the condition of the buildings.

The condition issues include problematic roofs of both the Victorian building (loose slates) and the former village hall (asbestos), erratic and inefficient heating, and a range of other problems.

It is now subject to reactive repairs pending the confirmation of a suitable long term solution.

3.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues

The main 20th century school hall has an asbestos roof with multiple leaks and is a notably unattractive building. The condition of the pupil toilets are poor. Most of the spaces in the school are below the recommended area as set out on BB103 Area Guidelines for Schools. The modular classroom is perhaps the best of the current accommodation.

The swimming pool itself is a good facility, but its plastic roof is not in good condition. The school values the swimming pool very highly, and it is used by a number of other primary schools in the area.

An independent day nursery/preschool operates from the site. It owns its own modular building (which is in good condition). It works closely with the school.

Overall the impression of the school buildings is of a mis-match of different buildings, many of poor quality.

The developed area of the site – i.e. the buildings and hard surfaces is at the front. The school field is behind the school building. This is a pleasant area of green space, however the overhead power cables are a less attractive feature and limit the activities which can take place on the field to some extent.

The case for improving or replacing the building has been accepted for some time, however there has been discussion about the best way of doing this.

The main options for Peterchurch were:

- To do nothing (always a potential option)
- To acquire a new site adjacent to Fairfield High School and rebuild there
- To rebuild on the existing site

These options led to the commissioning of a report by BBLP on the highways and environmental implications of the proposals.

More recently the District Valuer was commissioned to provide valuations of the various piece of land involved in the options, whether land which would need to be purchased, or land which could be sold.

Options for replacing the Peterchurch buildings were investigated because the cost of repairs would be very high (>£1 million for the asbestos roof on the main building alone plus a further large sum to address other deficiencies) and would still leave the school with unsuitable premises in terms of room size and arrangement.

The attraction of the Fairfield relocation was that it would create a campus enabling some services to be shared between the two schools, and for the deficiency of playing field space at Fairfield to be addressed. There are attractions to campus arrangements where schools work more closely together. There were some environmental benefits which could be addressed if funding could be found to improve the poor access to Fairfield along narrow lanes, prone to flooding.

If Peterchurch Primary School were relocated to an adjacent site, then Fairfield might benefit from the environmental works that would have to be done as part of that project. This could include better traffic management around the nearby lanes, and works to reduce the impact of potential flooding. However this would entail substantial costs which would have to come from council funds – and could be supported by a capital receipt from the potential sale of the current Peterchurch school site. There was no strong support for this option from local stakeholders, and possibly active opposition from those who wish to retain the primary school “at the heart of the village”.

The option to rebuild on the current site would not create a primary secondary campus. There may be some technical challenges around managing a construction project on the site of a working school which might require decanting into temporary accommodation. We know from the experience at Colwall that this can be extremely expensive and consume considerable resources for which there is little to show at the end of the project. The presence of electrical power lines over the playing field constrains how the site might be reorganised. Notwithstanding these challenges, a rebuild on the current site is likely to be the simpler, less expensive project. It is reported that it is the preference of the parish council, who wish to see the school located in the centre of the village.

Doing “nothing” does not seem a prudent approach. Whilst the major condition issues could be addressed through maintenance interventions, these would still be expensive, and would leave the school with unsuitable accommodation, in which many rooms were below the recommended area, and the overall aesthetic of the school was unattractive. Some of the environmental issues might be addressed, but costs would quickly mount up to the point where they were not far short of a complete rebuild. Unless decision makers were determined to keep costs as low as possible, only addressing condition issues, with no attention to suitability this does not seem a good use of resources.

A feasibility study has recently been conducted by Hayhurst & Co who were appointed following a competitive tendering process, to identify possible options for the school in Peterchurch. These options included the minimalist of works to the school (renew and repair), significant refurbishment works (remodel and extend), and a new build. High level indicative and estimated costs of each of the options were provided. The costs were based on a mixture of lowest, mean average and highest rates derived from benchmark projects of a similar nature. As data obtained from benchmark projects is likely to represent the lowest priced competitive tender, 5% was added to allow budgets to reflect a realistic competitive tendering environment. These costs are based on a construction period from 2021 to 2022.

Council approved funding of £1m towards improvement works or new build at Peterchurch in December 2014 followed by a further £4.5m in December 2015 making a total of £5.5m available in the capital programme for a new build at Peterchurch. This funding was considered in line with new school building projects at the time. With inflation costs at approximately 6% per year, this would make this value the equivalent of approximately £8.5m in 2019 based on a construction period in 2021/2022.

3.2. High Level Metrics

- Revenue cost savings per year for the school
- Reduced maintenance costs per year

4. Scope

4.1. Included in Scope

A replacement primary school for Peterchurch including all teaching and support spaces, including playground and playing field, necessary for it to function as a full one form entry school but with the provision of five classes initially. The facility will include for the provision of a nursery to accommodate the one currently on site and may include some work to the swimming pool to enable its continued use.

4.2. Not included in Scope

- The re-provision or upgrading of the swimming pool facilities on site.
- Additional highways improvement works other than those required to enable access to and egress from the re-designed site.

5. Stakeholders

- Headteacher of Peterchurch Primary School
- Chair of Governors at Peterchurch Primary School
- Parents/guardians of children at Peterchurch Primary School
- Peterchurch community
- Ward Councillors
- Children & Families Directorate
- Property Services
- Procurement
- Finance
- Health & Safety
- Legal

6. Dependencies

6.1. Initiatives which depend on this project are:

None

6.2. This project depends on:

- Appropriate levels of resource and expertise
- Contractor availability
- The required level of engagement from stakeholders

7. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

7.1. Quantifiable

- Potential for reduced revenue costs to schools
- Fit for purpose teaching accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Reduction in reactive maintenance costs
- Improved Display Energy Certificate (DEC) rating for schools
- Compliance with government guidelines

7.2. Non-quantifiable

- Provision of new classrooms designed and built to modern standards and offering a high quality learning environment for children
- Provision of a playing field free from the risks of the overhead power cable, if this is to be re-routed underground
- Safer entry routes to and from the school building
- No potential to exposure from asbestos
- Risk mitigation

8. Contribution to Strategic Objectives

- To secure better services, quality of life and value for money
Through minimising property costs and reducing the risk of service failure
- Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
Create permanent build accommodation that meets the governments building specifications

9. Potential Costs and Options for Project

- Do nothing – Whilst the major condition issues could be addressed through maintenance interventions, these would still be expensive, and would leave the school with unsuitable accommodation, in which many rooms were below the recommended area, and the overall aesthetic of the school was unattractive. Some of the environmental issues might be addressed, but costs would quickly mount up to the point where they were not far short of a complete rebuild. Unless decision makers were determined to keep costs as low as possible, only addressing condition issues, with no attention to suitability this does not seem a good use of resources.
- Option 1 – Refurbish (renew and repair) the existing buildings. This option puts forward the lightest touch approach possible retaining as much of the existing school as possible whilst providing the required teaching and support spaces. Only the poorest quality spaces are demolished and the remaining existing building is repaired and refurbished. Existing traffic issues are addressed as far as possible without demolition of the school house and hall buildings. Whilst this option would improve the quality of the school accommodation and provide adequate teaching space to the majority of the building, it will not resolve all the existing building issues identified. The suitability of the school hall and the safeguarding issues associated with traffic will not be addressed. This option may be the cheapest to deliver however it would still require a high level of on-going maintenance and day-to-day operational costs.
- Option 2 – Renew (remodel and extend) the existing buildings. All the existing building issues would be addressed to some extent via this route but it is unlikely that they will all be resolved. It retains the parts of the school that are suitable for re-use and / or have been highlighted by planning as worthy of retaining. All other buildings will be demolished and a new extension constructed to house the required spaces. Additional parking and an improved drop-off and pedestrian access would be provided to the front of site. This option will not however resolve all the existing safeguarding issues associated with traffic to the front of site. It reuses some of the existing building although proposes extensive work to it which will incur a long construction programme, be costly and very disruptive to the school.
- Option 3 – Replace (rebuild) the existing building with a new build. This option puts forward a brand new school building to the rear of the site, demolishing the existing school in its entirety. It fully addresses the issues associated with on-site parking and drop off areas and is able to be constructed with the least disruption to the school. This will also provide the lowest on-going maintenance costs of the three options into the future.

10. Costs and Timescales to Develop the Full Business Case

The full business case will be developed from existing staff resource in the Children & Families Education & Development team with support from other stakeholders. This will be developed prior to the project commencing at the start of the 2020/21 financial year.

11. Risks of not doing the Project

Risks are potential threats that may occur but have not yet happened. Risk management will monitor the identified risks and take any remedial action should the risk happen.

11.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Impact on service delivery
- Increased cost of maintenance
- Further deterioration of the buildings
- Potential for serious physical injury
- Potential for illness caused from environmental conditions imposed by buildings
- Children may have to be accommodated elsewhere or not be educated. There would be an increase in transport costs to accommodate children elsewhere
- Reputational risk

11.2. The key project risks are:

- Insufficient budget
- Insufficient resource
- Planning permission not obtained
- Disruption to school
- Contractor availability

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Finance Template

Capital cost of project	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Design	1,169				1,169
Build	750	6,991			7,741
Fees	400	491			891
Contingency	350	702			1,052
TOTAL	2,669	8,184			10,853

Funding streams	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Prudential borrowing		5,353			5,353
Prudential borrowing already secured in capital programme in prior years	2,669	2,831			5,500
TOTAL	2,669	8,184			10,853

Revenue budget implications	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Reduction in annual energy costs					
Reduced maintenance costs for school					
TOTAL					

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

BUSINESS CASE

Brookfield Special School Improvement Project

Release: Draft

Date: 16.09.19

Author:

Document Number: v1

Business Case History

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The final version of the document will be found on the council's project management system, Verto, within the Brookfield School listing.

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This document requires the following approvals.

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13. Purpose of Document

On 6th December 2018, the procurement of a business case (phase 1 feasibility study) was approved, and recorded as an officer decision by the Director of Children and Families, its purpose being to explore options for the modification and improvement of the site and buildings at The Brookfield Special School.

Phase 1 of the project looked at feasibility for the site in two key areas:

1. To improve the compliance (and therefore the suitability) of the school with Government Building Bulletin 104, which describes the schedule of accommodation that is required for the provision of education for special needs pupils with social emotional and mental health needs.
2. To develop suitable accommodation on the main school site to enable the education of those pupils currently educated in a split site temporary building on Symonds Street.

This document provides an update on the results of phase 1 of the project. Based upon the outcome of phase 1, it also sets out the rationale for a capital funding request to council, in order to meet the funding gap apparent between the funds currently available, and the identified capital costs (including contractor costs, and client costs) associated with the next steps of the project.

14. Objectives

1. To present the outcome of the phase 1 feasibility study to inform future decision making.
2. Based upon the above, to seek initial agreement for the overarching capital costs associated with the next steps of the project.

15. Background

The Brookfield Special School educates pupils between 7 and 16 years old, with social emotional, mental health needs. It is the only school in Herefordshire with this designation. It is situated on a site running alongside Grandstand Road, and adjacent to the Hereford Racecourse.

Brookfield was a Herefordshire Council maintained school, but is now an academy school. The 1996 Education Act allows for the spending of council funds to effect improvements to academy schools.

The imperative to improve the suitability of the school site and buildings was recognised in 2015. At that time, no detailed work was completed in order to establish the feasibility of the proposed improvements, or the high level costs that may be incurred. Agreement was gained to place an indicative sum into the council capital programme, which would be serviced mainly by prudential borrowing, but also by a small element of anticipated grant funding. This total sum, minus the grant funding anticipated, has been carried forward, or 're-profiled' to the present time.

In order to take forward the intention to future proof this key special school provision, it was recognised that a robust feasibility study was needed in order to examine the options available to achieve the required improvements, and to provide a rigorous rationale in the production of indicative high level costs for such options.

15.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues

- The Brookfield School currently serves the needs of some 80 pupils. These pupils all have an education health care plan (EHCP) describing their needs, and how these needs should be met. This is the only Herefordshire school designated to meet those social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) needs. If this school does not meet basic requirements, higher costs for education may need to be incurred by allocating spaces at settings outside Herefordshire.
- The current premises were built to accommodate approximately half this number of pupils, although the council has provided an extra primary phase classroom recently, to partially alleviate the unsuitability of the accommodation. The buildings are still not compliant with government guidance, and as a result, a cohort of pupils is currently 'housed' in a temporary classroom on Symonds Street, which is in very poor condition, and is inefficient to operate, as it is some way away from the main school site.
- None of the classrooms in the main school secondary phase building are compliant in size, and there are no dedicated spaces for the delivery of physical education, which is a statutory requirement, or therapy. In addition, there are no facilities for girls' hygiene. This year for the first time, the school has a girl on roll, and there may be more in the future.
- Capacity to meet the demand for SEMH pupil placements in Herefordshire is pressured, but by future proofing the Brookfield setting with a well thought through improvement programme, the council will ensure that in future SEN pupils with SEMH are accommodated in a high quality physical environment.

16. Phase One Outcomes

The local authority undertook a procurement exercise to commission expert consultant advisors who would;

- a) Provide a range of feasible options to achieve the desired improvements to the school buildings, and
- b) Provide a breakdown of costs for each option.

16.1. Architecture and design consultancy support – outcome of feasibility

The architectural design company appointed to conduct the feasibility study was Haverstock Associates.

The resulting report provides guidance in terms of the range of options possible on the Brookfield site, along with indicative costs for each element. The option that will achieve the priority improvements for the school, includes the following elements selected from the options presented;

- 1) An on-site new build small workshop with wet room and external horticulture area for the pupils currently accommodated off site in a temporary classroom on Symonds Street.
- 2) A small sports hall situated between the primary and secondary school buildings that will serve both phases.
- 3) The provision of two extra DfE compliant classrooms for the secondary age phase, by the creation of a mezzanine floor to the secondary phase dining room
- 4) The creation of girls toilet and hygiene facilities within the secondary block

- 5) The creation of an external fire escape from the first floor of the secondary block, and the upgrading of the two internal staircases to fire protected status.

Other options described within the report demonstrate that a complete new build school on the site would not be cost effective, and that the necessary improvements are achievable by a mixture of remodelling the current secondary building, and creating two new build components, one for sport and one for vocational education.

The works proposed in numbers 1 – 5 above, present the least costly option of those prepared by the feasibility study, but will still not be achievable within the budget currently available of £2.744m

The estimate for construction costs is based on various GIFA for all options. Costs are current day fixed price at 1st Quarter 2019 pricing levels. The costs include a design and construction contingency of 15%, and an inflation, professional fees and surveys contingency of 12.5%

The feasibility contractor has assumed a period of 12 months in order to develop the design, ready for tender in 1Q2020 and a mid-point of construction at 1Q21. Subject to the issue of a more detailed programme these values and subsequent costs will be revised. Due to the need to secure extra funding, the timeline assumed by Haverstock may be compromised.

A number of assumptions have been made in the costings which include the following:

- That there is no asbestos present within the building
- That there will be no overly restrictive planning conditions imposed upon the development
- That the project will be procured as a single stage tender and competitively tendered
- That some walls and facilities are retained within our 'Minor Remodelling - Level 1' allowances
- That the current building is in sound structural condition and that no major structural repairs will be required.
- That the tender inflation and mid-point inflation allowances are based upon RLF's assumptions for the project programme

In addition there are a number of exclusions identified within the report including:

- Removal of any unknown contaminated material, including asbestos
- Works in connection with abnormal ground or drainage conditions
- Land acquisitions costs and fees
- Services diversions or upgrades
- Unexploded ordinance survey
- Legal fees and funding costs
- Loose furniture and fittings
- Planning fees and charges
- Archaeological fees
- Value Added Tax
- Professional fees over and above the 12.5% allowance.
- Decant and move management fees
- Marketing costs or advertisement fees
- Rights of Light charges
- S106 fees

16.2. Financial modelling

The total estimated cost of the construction work is based upon a start time for the project, of Q12020. This timeline may not be achievable, so a percentage increase for inflation has been added to the feasibility construction cost. In addition, in order to respond to the exclusions present in the feasibility report, percentage costs have been added to cover client contingency, furniture and ICT, fees (property services, project lead), legal fixed sum, and corporate project management fees. This brings forward a total estimated cost of £3,939,000. The above assumed costs have been discussed with council property services and finance officers, and agreed at children and families capital programme board 23.09.19.

Detailed costs - In order to provide a more detailed estimate it is recommended by the feasibility study that the design brief for this school is further developed by the design team, the council and the school.

Procurement and commissioning of an external consultant to provide a costing review. (Blueschool recommendation 4). This cost check has been completed by Herefordshire council property services.

17. Scope

17.1. Included in Scope

- The project will include completing a detailed business case to determine the final approval (or otherwise) for the project.
- Design and build including an allowance for fixtures and fittings

17.2. Not included in Scope

- Full cost of movable furniture and ICT, which will be met by the academy school

18. Stakeholders

Project Sponsor –Director Children and Families

Lead Member –Lead Member Children and Families

Project Assurance – Senior Project Manager Corporate Services

Project Lead –Schools Capital Investment Advisor Children and Families

Finance Lead – Strategic Capital Finance Manager Corporate Services

Procurement Lead – Procurement Officer Corporate Services

Property Lead – Project Manager and Coordinator Economy and Place

Legal Lead – Tba

Brookfield School Head teacher

DfE contact reef Brookfield Academy

19. Dependencies

- Agreed lease changes between Herefordshire Council and both the Brookfield School, and their co-tenants occupying the other half of the council building
- The agreement to a capital funding request that would cover the funding gap apparent between funds already in place (£2.744m) and the overall anticipated high level cost (£3.939m). Capital funding request of £1.195m (see Appendix 1 capital funding request Brookfield).

20. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

- Ensuring greater compliance with the DfE building bulletins describing schedules of accommodation suitable for SEN children and young people
- Providing facilities for physical education, a key curriculum component that is severely restricted currently.
- Providing hygiene facilities and toilets for female pupils
- Enabling the school to operate on a single site, and decommissioning the use of a temporary mobile classroom currently sited on council land situated on Symonds Street.
- Provision of high quality vocational facilities for horticulture
- Controlling the costs of placements for pupils with an education health care plan for social emotional, mental health needs, by future proofing the Brookfield School as an 80 placement school in high quality buildings
- Revenue savings for the academy school by use of more energy efficient and ecologically sound materials.
- Future capital cost avoidance for both the school and Herefordshire Council
- Improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs

21. Contribution to Strategic Objectives

The council's corporate plan has four priorities. The improvement to Brookfield School supports two of these:

- Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
- Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

The children and young people's directorate schools capital investment strategy itemises 10 principles. The Brookfield improvement project would align with principles 1, 2, 7, 8, 10 and 11.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2934/schools_capital_investment_strategy.pdf

22. Potential Costs and Options for Project

- Capital Costs
 - Estimated costs of remodel and new build improvements- £3.939m
This could be financed through current prudential borrowing listed in the council capital programme of £1.895m, with the addition of the special provision government fund for SEN capital improvements of £0.849m (governance already in place to spend on Brookfield School), and the addition of a proposed capital funding request for £1.195m. See costs table below.
- One-off Revenue Costs
 - Professional fees for feasibility Study (£25k already met from cost centre C03495)
 - Additional Revenue Costs if project proceeds after feasibility study (included in the above capital total)

Capital cost of project	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Design & Build Costs</i>	1,659	1,000			2,659
<i>Fees</i>	351	89			440
<i>Furniture & IT</i>	0	150			150
<i>Contingency</i>	450	240			690
TOTAL	2,500	1,439			3,939

Funding streams	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Special Provision Capital Fund</i>	849				849
<i>Prudential borrowing in capital programme</i>	1,651	244			1,895
<i>Further request for Council funding</i>		1,195			1,195
TOTAL	2,500	1,439			3,939

23. Risks of not doing the Project

23.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Losing the opportunity to future proof the only Herefordshire school accommodating children and young people with an EHCP for SEMH, and by doing so ensure high quality accommodation.
- Planning permission on the split site element of the school on Symonds Street will lapse.
- Failure to release the site on Symonds Street for alternative council use.
- Incurring further capital costs in a piecemeal way, as accommodation pressures escalate
- Inability of the school to operate the full curriculum requirement
- Difficulty in sourcing placements may occur, in particular for girls with SEMH. This may lead to increased commissioning costs for Herefordshire and increased pressure on the high needs block (budget for placement of SEN pupils).
-

The key project risks are:

Risk	Mitigation
If lease changes are not negotiated by Herefordshire Council, only a much scaled down improvement will be possible that doesn't meet the key project priorities.	Legal advice to be sought, the project and redesign will not commence until this has been confirmed and will be monitored through the project board.
The indicative high level costs from the feasibility study, with the percentage uplift for client costs and other costs identified in the table of costs (appendix 1) exceed the current available budget.	To be confirmed by the procurement and commissioning of an external consultant to provide a costing review. (Blueschool recommendation 4)
The failure to secure a capital funding request that will meet the identified funding gap of £1.195m for the refurbishment costs and other identified costs, would result in a much scaled down improvement project that doesn't meet the key project priorities	The detailed business plan will not be put forward to cabinet until a prior council decision is made to approve funding identified as necessary in order to meet the project priorities.

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

FEASIBILITY BUSINESS CASE

School Asbestos Surveys & Remedial Works Programme

Release: Draft

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Author:

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Stage 0 Business Case

24. Purpose of Document

This Feasibility Business Case contains information that describes the justification for continuing the development of a detailed Business Case for a programme of asbestos surveys and associated remedial works for all Herefordshire schools. The Business Case is to be submitted to the Children & Families Capital Programme Board and if accepted, a more detailed Business Case will be developed.

25. Objectives

If the Business Case is approved then the project can move into the implementation phase and deliver the following:

- Ensure the council's estate is well maintained, safe and fit for purpose
- Reduce schools' revenue expenditure through more efficient buildings
- Extend the life cycle of the council's assets and protect / enhance their value
- Ensure that sufficient pupil places in suitable accommodation are available to meet demand in schools

The business case sets out the work required to obtain current up-to-date asbestos surveys for all Herefordshire schools and undertake any remedial works required to ensure the risk of exposure to asbestos in any school building is minimised.

26. Background

Herefordshire Council is responsible for maintaining all community and voluntary controlled schools located within Herefordshire. This equates to 44 establishments on 45 sites for which the council is the employer. There are also a further 55 schools that are categorised as voluntary aided or academy which, although the council does not have direct responsibility for, in terms of the management of asbestos, as landlord, the council is considered to be the duty holder, dependent upon the contents of the lease and the suitability of the previous asbestos management information at the time of conversion to academy status.

Optimisation of the schools estate is the subject of the schools capital investment strategy which seeks to ensure that there are sufficient high quality learning environments, in good condition, permanent structure buildings that are of the size set out in the Government building specifications. This project supports the Corporate Plan priorities of 'Keeping children safe and giving them a great start in life' and 'To secure better services, quality of life and value for money'.

Asbestos can be found in any industrial or residential building built or refurbished before the year 2000. It is in many of the common materials used in the building trade that can be encountered during any work. The duty to manage asbestos is a legal requirement under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (Regulation 4). It applies to the owners and occupiers of commercial premises (such as shops, offices,

industrial units, schools etc) who have responsibility for maintenance and repair activities. In addition to these responsibilities, they also have a duty to assess the presence and condition of any asbestos-containing materials. If asbestos is present, or is presumed to be present, then it must be managed appropriately. An asbestos survey is an effective way to help manage asbestos in premises by providing accurate information about the location, amount and type of any asbestos-containing materials (ACMs). The person responsible for maintenance of non-domestic premises must either arrange a survey if it is suspected there could be ACMs in the premises or, the duty-holder may instead choose to presume the worst case of widespread asbestos in the premises and would then need to take all appropriate full stringent precautions for any work that takes place. However, it is often less troublesome and more proportionate to have an asbestos survey carried out so it is absolutely clear whether asbestos is present or not and what its condition is.

Asbestos still kills around 5000 workers each year, this is more than the number of people killed on the road. Around 20 tradesman die each week as a result of past exposure. However, asbestos is not just a problem of the past. It can be present today in any building built or refurbished before the year 2000.

When materials that contain asbestos are disturbed or damaged, fibres are released into the air. When these fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases. These diseases will not affect anyone immediately; they often take a long time to develop, and while some can be treated or managed once diagnosed, most have no known cure.

Asbestos can cause serious chronic diseases including mesothelioma, asbestos-related lung cancer, asbestosis or pleural thickening; some of which are fatal, or potentially fatal.

26.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues

The importation, supply and use of all forms of asbestos are banned. However, many buildings, and some plant and equipment, still contain asbestos-containing materials (ACMs). The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 came into force on 6 April 2012, updating previous asbestos regulations to take account of the European Commission's view that the UK had not fully implemented the EU Directive on exposure to asbestos (Directive 2009/148/EC). They include:

- If existing asbestos containing materials are in good condition and are not likely to be damaged, they may be left in place; their condition monitored and managed to ensure they are not disturbed.
- If you're responsible for maintenance of non-domestic premises, you have a 'duty to manage' the asbestos in them, to protect anyone using or working in the premises from the risks to health that exposure to asbestos causes.
- If you want to do any building or maintenance work in premises, or on plant or equipment that might contain asbestos, you need to identify where it is and its type and condition; assess the risks, and manage and control these risks.
- In the majority of cases, work with asbestos needs to be done by a licensed contractor. This work includes most asbestos removal, all work with sprayed asbestos coatings and asbestos lagging and most work with asbestos insulation and asbestos insulating board (AIB).
- If you are carrying out non-licensed asbestos work, this still requires effective controls.

- Training is mandatory for anyone liable to be exposed to asbestos fibres at work. This includes maintenance workers and others who may come into contact with or disturb asbestos (eg cable installers), as well as those involved in asbestos removal work.

The HSE guidance on managing asbestos states that the dutyholder is the owner of the non-domestic premises or the person or organisation that has clear responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises, for example through an explicit agreement such as a tenancy agreement or contract.

The extent of the duty will depend on the nature of that agreement. In a building occupied by one leaseholder, the agreement might be for either the owner or leaseholder to take on the full duty for the whole building; or it might be to share the duty. In a multi-occupied building, the agreement might be that the owner takes on the full duty for the whole building. Or it might be that the duty is shared - for example, the owner takes responsibility for the common parts while the leaseholders take responsibility for the parts they occupy. Sometimes, there might be an agreement to pass the responsibilities to a managing agent.

In some cases, there may be no tenancy agreement or contract. Or, if there is, it may not specify who has responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises. In these cases, or where the premises are unoccupied, the duty is placed on whoever has control of the premises, or part of the premises. Often this will be the owner.

In public buildings, such as hospitals, schools and similar premises, the identity of the dutyholder will depend on how the responsibility for maintenance of the premises is allocated. For example, for most schools, the dutyholder will be the employer. Who the employer is varies with the type of school. For local authority managed schools, e.g. community schools and voluntary-controlled schools, the employer is the local authority. For voluntary-aided and foundation schools, it will be the school governors, and for academy and Free Schools, the academy trust will be the employer. For independent and fee-paying schools, it may be the proprietor, governors or trustees. Budgets for repair and maintenance of school buildings are sometimes delegated to schools by a local authority. In such cases, the duty to manage asbestos is shared between schools and the local authority.

The asbestos survey can help to provide enough information so that an asbestos register, a risk assessment and a management plan can then be prepared. The survey will usually involve sampling and analysis to determine the presence of asbestos so asbestos surveys should only be carried out by competent surveyors who can clearly demonstrate they have the necessary skills, experience and qualifications.

An asbestos survey will identify:

- the location of any asbestos-containing materials in the building
- the type of asbestos they contain
- the condition these materials are in

Following a survey, the surveyor should produce a survey report which details the findings. This information can help to prepare an asbestos risk register.

The asbestos risk register is a key component of the required plan on how any asbestos found, or presumed to be, in your buildings will be managed. This management plan must contain current information about the presence and condition of any asbestos in the building. The asbestos risk register will therefore need to be updated on a regular basis (at least once a year). This should include:

- regular inspections to check the current condition of asbestos materials
- deletions to the register when any asbestos is removed
- additions to the register when new areas are surveyed and asbestos is located
- changes to the register (at any time asbestos-containing materials are found to have deteriorated)

The risk register can be kept as a paper or electronic record and it is very important that this is kept up to date and easily accessible. Paper copies may be easier to pass on to visiting maintenance workers, who will need them to know the location and condition of any asbestos before they start work. Electronic copies are easier to update and are probably better suited for people responsible for large numbers of properties or bigger premises.

The current Regulations place a legal duty on employers to provide information, instruction and training to any of their employees who are likely to be exposed to asbestos as part of their work. Every employer must make sure that anyone who is liable to disturb asbestos during their normal work, or who supervises those employees, gets the correct level of information, instruction and training so that they can work safely and competently without risk to themselves or others.

Workers and supervisors must be able to recognise asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and know what to do if they come across them in order to protect themselves and others.

Attending a training course on its own will not make a worker competent. Competence is developed over time by implementing and consolidating skills learnt during training, on-the-job learning, instruction and assessment.

It is important that the level of information, instruction and training is appropriate for the work and the roles undertaken by each worker (and supervisor). Information, instruction and training for asbestos awareness is intended to give workers and supervisors the information they need to avoid work that may disturb asbestos during any normal work which could disturb the fabric of a building, or other item which might contain asbestos. It will not prepare workers, or self-employed contractors, to carry out work with asbestos-containing materials. If a worker is planning to carry out work that will disturb ACMs, further information, instruction and training will be needed.

Information instruction and training on asbestos awareness is merely intended to help workers avoid carrying out work that will disturb asbestos. There is no legal requirement to repeat an entire formal awareness refresher training course every 12 months. However some form of refresher should be given, as necessary, to help ensure knowledge of asbestos awareness is maintained.

All schools have had an asbestos survey conducted in previous years, however the quality and compliance of the surveys has come into question in recent years whilst undertaking routine planned maintenance works and undertaking a compliance audit of schools as part of the new set of condition reports that has been commissioned. The concern predominantly lies in whether the regular inspections to check the condition of the asbestos materials is being completed and the register being subsequently updated as result. It has also thrown into question whether the responsible person in the schools has sufficient knowledge and awareness to complete the necessary checks and maintain the risk register and management plan as required.

In order to address these items a programme of works is required to undertake new surveys at all schools and produce new management plans that the schools will be involved in completing. Schools will be prioritised based on known information relating to the type of build and age of school, complemented by

the condition surveys and any known works being planned. This will create a schedule of works where the schools most likely to be affected by asbestos will be surveyed first. The intention will be to provide some training for the responsible person at the school at the same time that the surveys are produced.

Further investigation will need to be undertaken to identify the position of responsibility in terms of academies and free schools as the dutyholder will depend on the contents of the academy lease and the quality of information handed to the school at the time of conversion. All Herefordshire schools with the exception of three which are freehold schools will therefore need to be included in the programme pending confirmation of dutyholder for academies and free schools. As landlord and / or employer, the duty to produce the surveys falls to the council.

26.2. High Level Metrics

- Reduced risk of reactive asbestos related maintenance costs per year

27. Scope

27.1. Included in Scope

A set of new surveys and any required remedial works to reduce the risk of exposure to asbestos in all Herefordshire schools (with the exception of the three freehold school). These will be commissioned as a programme of works. The number of schools addressed each year will depend on the level of funding available and the amount of remedial works required to make safe.

27.2. Not included in Scope

- The three freehold schools in Herefordshire.

28. Stakeholders

- Headteachers of all Herefordshire Schools
- Chairs of Governors at Herefordshire Schools
- Parents/guardians of children at Herefordshire Schools
- Community of Herefordshire
- Ward Councillors
- Children & Families Directorate
- Property Services
- Procurement
- Finance
- Health & Safety
- Legal

29. Dependencies

29.1. Initiatives which depend on this project are:

None

29.2. This project depends on:

- Appropriate levels of resource and expertise
- Contractor availability
- The required level of engagement from stakeholders

30. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

30.1. Quantifiable

- Reduction in reactive asbestos related maintenance costs
- Compliance with HSE guidelines for managing asbestos

30.2. Non-quantifiable

- Reduced risk to exposure from asbestos
- Risk mitigation

31. Contribution to Strategic Objectives

- To secure better services, quality of life and value for money

Through minimising reactive asbestos related maintenance works and reducing the risk of exposure to asbestos

- Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

Reducing the risk of exposure to asbestos

32. Potential Costs and Options for Project

- Do nothing – There is concern that the quality of the asbestos surveys is poor where they have not been kept up to date or where regular inspections have not been undertaken. It is known that the HSE are conducting spot checks as part of their current and future work programmes for asbestos management in schools. If we are unable to demonstrate that we have a process in place for addressing the known issues then we should not be in breach and liable for notice contraventions or fines.

- Option 1 – Undertake all surveys of schools and address any works identified by the contractors. Whilst this would be the ideal scenario, it is difficult to judge the cost of undertaking this work. The likelihood is that the surveys will identify works that are required and would propose removal rather than encapsulation. Removal would be more costly, but encapsulation would be just as effective as it would reduce the risk even if it did not remove it completely.
- Option 2 – Create a programme of works whereby schools are prioritised based on a number of criteria and surveys and remedial works to reduce risk of exposure are undertaken. This is the preferred option and will enable asbestos management in schools to be updated over a number of years in line with the budget available.

33. Costs and Timescales to Develop the Full Business Case

The full business case will be developed from existing staff resource in the Children & Families Education & Development team with support from other stakeholders. This will be developed prior to the project commencing at the start of the 2020/21 financial year.

34. Risks of not doing the Project

Risks are potential threats that may occur but have not yet happened. Risk management will monitor the identified risks and take any remedial action should the risk happen.

34.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Increased cost of reactive asbestos related maintenance
- Further deterioration of the buildings
- Potential for prosecution by HSE
- Potential for illness caused from environmental conditions imposed by buildings (exposure to asbestos)
- Children may have to be accommodated elsewhere or not be educated. There would be an increase in transport costs to accommodate children elsewhere
- Reputational risk

34.2. The key project risks are:

- Insufficient budget
- Insufficient resource
- Disruption to school
- Contractor availability

35. Appendices

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

FEASIBILITY BUSINESS CASE

School Boilers & Associated Heating Works Programme

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Author:

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Stage 0 Business Case

36. Purpose of Document

This Feasibility Business Case contains information that describes the justification for continuing the development of a detailed Business Case for a programme of boiler replacement and associated heating works for council maintained Herefordshire schools. The Business Case is to be submitted to the Children & Families Capital Programme Board and if accepted, a more detailed Business Case will be developed.

37. Objectives

If the Business Case is approved then the project can move into the implementation phase and deliver the following:

- Ensure the council's estate is well maintained, safe and fit for purpose
- Reduce schools' revenue expenditure through more efficient buildings
- Extend the life cycle of the council's assets and protect / enhance their value
- Ensure that sufficient pupil places in suitable accommodation are available to meet demand in schools

The business case sets out the work required to replace boilers reaching the end of their life expectancy and any associated heating works for all maintained Herefordshire schools.

38. Background

Herefordshire Council is responsible for maintaining all community and voluntary controlled schools located within Herefordshire. This equates to 44 establishments on 45 sites for which the council is the employer. Optimisation of the schools estate is the subject of the schools capital investment strategy which seeks to ensure that there are sufficient high quality learning environments, in good condition, permanent structure buildings that are of the size set out in the Government building specifications. This project supports the Corporate Plan priorities of 'Keeping children safe and giving them a great start in life' and 'To secure better services, quality of life and value for money'.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provide funding streams to the council for school capital works.

The funding streams are to be used as follows:

- Maintenance grant – to support large scale improvement work in community and voluntary controlled schools. Grant monies not allocated or spent within a financial year can be retained by the council for use in the following years. The council must complete statutory returns which include details of where the funding has been spent.

- Basic need grant – this is to be used to create additional pupil places where there is demand and could be directed to any school including academies. The council must complete statutory returns which include details of where the funding has been spent.

Voluntary aided schools have access to the ESFA's LCVAP (local authority co-ordinated voluntary aided programme) funding to support large scale improvement work. Whilst the council currently has a duty to ensure that grant monies are spent effectively, this funding does not pass through the council's accounts. The council has a role purely in co-ordinating its distribution. Monies allocated must be spent in the same financial year. Schools then apply direct to the ESFA for their agreed allocation.

Academy and free schools have access to the ESFA's condition improvement fund for building works, both maintenance and improvements. They cannot utilise the maintenance grant or LCVAP funding.

The national schools funding formula means all schools receive a relatively small devolved formula capital allocation to support minor maintenance or improvement works. Schools may convert revenue budgets to capital to assist with these works. Bigger maintenance schemes like the replacement of a roof, a new heating system or windows are funded through the central maintenance grant awarded to the council for community and voluntary controlled schools. Denominational schools have use of the LCVAP grant to support these large schemes. It is expected that schools make a contribution to works by utilising their devolved formula capital allocation. Some schools may also be able to contribute funding from their balances. These opportunities will always be explored by council officers in discussion with schools.

The sums allocated to local authorities are determined by the Department for Education and ESFA and published on the government website. The process for locally determining its expenditure is based on the council's schools capital investment strategy. Maintenance work is prioritised on the basis of condition surveys.

There is a backlog of urgent and essential maintenance works at local authority maintained and voluntary controlled schools. There is also insufficient budget to address all the maintenance and condition issues in schools, as indicated in the last set of condition surveys produced. In order to prioritise the expenditure, all maintained school condition surveys are scrutinised to identify the most significant and pressing work that has not previously been addressed or which is likely to have deteriorated since the condition report was produced.

38.1. Project Drivers and High Level Issues

The council receive a capital maintenance allocation of approximately £1.2m annually. This funding is insufficient to cover all the items of work that are highlighted by condition reports to be addressed in any one financial year and any unforeseen emergency works that arise during the course of the year. This results in a backlog of maintenance as work that cannot be undertaken due to a lack of resources has to be programmed in to future years which then has a knock-on effect to the amount of work that can be addressed in those subsequent years. Work is therefore prioritised according to information provided in condition reports with those items deemed to be in the worst condition undertaken first.

Even with this prioritisation of works, emergency items are coming forward mid-year. Some of these may be new issues that were not included in the condition reports e.g. leaking roofs resulting from excessive bad weather, and others will be items that have deteriorated further than expected in the condition reports and therefore not addressed in a timely enough manner as part of the planned maintenance programme.

Schools may have their own devolved formula capital to cover minor maintenance works in accordance with Annex O (Schedule of Maintenance Responsibility) of The Herefordshire Councils Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools or Local Management of Schools (LMS), however where works are of a greater scale e.g. whole roof or boiler replacements, these works fall to the council to fund.

The back-log of maintenance is not going to reduce without having additional resource added to the programme.

A new set of condition reports has recently been commissioned which will provide a more accurate reflection of the state of the maintained schools. It is expected that these reports will still show that the level of work required in each financial year will exceed the budget available. To enable the council to get to a position where it can be proactive in its maintenance regime, it is considered necessary to undertake additional works above that which can be covered by the ESFA maintenance grant. To enable economies of scale and to secure best value it was deemed most appropriate to proceed with a particular element of work that could be bundled together for multiple schools and tendered.

The element of work that has been identified as the first area to be addressed is boiler replacements and associated heating works. This is considered to be a health and safety item that could create problems in schools. Should the heating fail schools would have to close which would disrupt the education of the children if it became a long-term closure and alternative accommodation in another building or school could not be identified.

Boilers cannot always be replaced in isolation. Where the heating system is old, a new boiler could potentially put added stress on the pipework which could result in burst pipes and therefore an even worse situation at the school than if the boiler failed alone as there would be the additional problem of water damage on top of a cold building.

The new condition reports will be used to identify all boiler and associated heating works required in schools over the next two years. These schools will be prioritised by condition and those with the most need put forward for inclusion in this programme of works up to the value of the funding available.

38.2. High Level Metrics

- Revenue cost savings per year for the school
- Reduced maintenance costs per year

39. Scope

39.1. Included in Scope

All boiler and associated heating systems in council maintained schools.

39.2. Not included in Scope

- Any other maintenance work that does not affect the boilers or heating systems in schools
- Works to boilers or heating systems in academies and free schools

40. Stakeholders

- Headteachers of all Herefordshire Schools
- Chairs of Governors at Herefordshire Schools
- Parents/guardians of children at Herefordshire Schools
- Community of Herefordshire
- Ward Councillors
- Children & Families Directorate
- Property Services
- Procurement
- Finance
- Health & Safety
- Legal

41. Dependencies

41.1. Initiatives which depend on this project are:

None

41.2. This project depends on:

- Appropriate levels of resource and expertise
- Contractor availability
- The required level of engagement from stakeholders

42. Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the proposed project are listed below:

42.1. Quantifiable

- Potential for reduced revenue costs to schools
- Fit for purpose teaching accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Reduction in reactive maintenance costs
- Improved Display Energy Certificate (DEC) rating for schools
- Compliance with government guidelines

42.2. Non-quantifiable

- Risk mitigation

43. Contribution to Strategic Objectives

Using the resources available to the council to ensure that Herefordshire's school buildings are well maintained and fit for purpose supports achievement of the council's corporate plan priorities to 'keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life' and to 'secure better services, quality of life and value for money'. The proposed works include mitigation of potential health and safety risks, aim to provide well maintained buildings which are more cost effective to run and therefore benefit all pupils, including looked after children and care leavers.

The schemes fit within the schools capital investment strategy which sets out the councils approach to delivering the legal duty to ensure there are enough school places for the children in its area. In Herefordshire this will be done in a way that supports the delivery of high quality education and contributes to the attractiveness of the county as a place to live and work.

The schemes fit within the corporate property strategy whose aims are to support and help deliver integrated public services across the county with the vision to support the efficient integrated delivery of public services across the county by providing modern, fit for purpose buildings, shared by public agencies.

44. Potential Costs and Options for Project

- Do nothing – This is not considered an option. There is already a back-log of maintenance according to the condition surveys conducted at schools and there is insufficient funding from the ESFA to address these items each year. The amount of back-log is therefore only going to rise year on year unless additional funding is secured. By not undertaking any works more children will be attending schools with defects, including those that are considered a health and safety concern.
- Option 1 – Funding could be requested for a different programme of works. The proposed works will be addressing a potential health and safety issue. Whilst there are other health and safety issues that are reported in the condition reports, the proposed elements are considered to be ones with the highest need.
- Option 2 – Undertake the programme of works as proposed. This is the preferred option. Schools will be prioritised according to need indicated in the new condition surveys. Schemes will be delivered up to the value of funding available.

45. Costs and Timescales to Develop the Full Business Case

The full business case will be developed from existing staff resource in the Children & Families Education & Development team with support from other stakeholders. This will be developed prior to the project commencing at the start of the 2020/21 financial year.

46. Risks of not doing the Project

Risks are potential threats that may occur but have not yet happened. Risk management will monitor the identified risks and take any remedial action should the risk happen.

46.1. The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Impact on service delivery
- Increased cost of maintenance
- Further deterioration of the buildings
- Potential for serious physical injury
- Potential for illness caused from environmental conditions imposed by buildings
- Children may have to be accommodated elsewhere or not be educated. There would be an increase in transport costs to accommodate children elsewhere
- Reputational risk

46.2. The key project risks are:

- Insufficient budget
- Insufficient resource
- Disruption to school
- Contractor availability

47. Appendices

Budget 20/21 and corporate priorities (2020 -2024)

Children and Young People
Scrutiny committee

25th November 2019

Development of corporate priorities



Herefordshire Council *Our ambition for Herefordshire*

 “Respecting the past, shaping our future - we will help build vibrant **communities**, create a thriving local economy and protect and enhance our **environment**”.

Community
 **Build communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together**

- Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve
- Help keep our families and communities healthy and independent
- Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices
- Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable adults
- Join up health and social care services in communities
- Create environments that make wellbeing inevitable
- Use technology to enable independent living
- Get the right mix of housing for our communities
- Build our own sustainable council houses

Economy
 **Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources**

- Use council assets to create more jobs
- Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment to our county
- Invest in education and the skills needed by employers
- Raise the average wage of people working in Herefordshire
- Encourage younger people to build their lives here
- Enhance digital connectivity for communities and business
- Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to increase tourism and attract new businesses
- Invest public money locally wherever possible

Environment
 **Protect our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live**

- Understand our carbon footprint and act to reduce it
- Lead our transition to a low carbon economy
- Improve and extend travel options throughout the county
- Ensure the best use of the county's natural resources
- Reduce waste and increase reuse, repair and recycling
- Protect the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards
- Address the climate emergency and support behaviour change of residents and businesses

Our principles

Partnership | We collaborate to maximise our strengths and resources
Sustainability | We use resources wisely so Herefordshire is preserved for future generations
Integrity | We make decisions based on evidence and work with respect, openness and accountability
Democracy | We strengthen local democracy, decision making and service delivery and involve more young people
Communication | We listen to and learn from our communities and help people connect through culture, creativity and care

 hfdscouncil www.herefordshire.gov.uk

- Series of workshops held to develop the overarching plan and identify the key themes of Economy, Community, Environment
- “1 page plan” developed to set out the ambition of the council and the principles of ways of working
- The themes and 1 page plan then tested through a series of public engagement events held throughout the county
- Public engagement feedback is continuing to inform the proposed budget 20/21, corporate plan and MTFS

Key themes

Priority theme	
Sustainability (environmental)	Enabling the county to operate differently/different future offer – fundamental review of Core Strategy Alternative travel options Sustainable house building
Sustainability (financial)	Investing money from small holdings principle must provide long term return on investment
Connectivity	Public transport schemes to connect city and market towns and complement regional and national networks Development of walking and cycle networks to enable alternative travel options Development of network of physical places (community hubs) for people to connect face to face Digital connectivity to enable the use of assistive living technology and online trading

Public engagement – approach taken and feedback

- 16 Pop-up events in all Market Towns in high footfall locations
- Voting on 6 priorities using tokens in ballot boxes
- Sticky dot exercise for sub-priorities
- Comments sheet
- 3 small group discussions with seldom heard groups
- 1 roundtable group discussion (Parish Summit)
- On-line consultation replicating pop-up methodology

Numbers engaged

- **1,056** people engaged in face-to-face consultation
- **271** young people engaged (19% of total no. engaged)
- **358** people engaged in on-line consultation
- Total number of people engaged in consultation **1,414**

Net Revenue Budget 2020/21

	£k
Council Tax assumed 4%	109,397
Business rates	36,726
Rural services delivery grant	5,101
Adult social care grant	4,875
Total net budget	156,099

Budget proposals

		£000s
Funding:		
	4% Council Tax	156,099
	Provisional settlement	
	Deferral of rate retention	
MTFS Base Budget		146,601
Known pressures	Contract inflation	5,055
	Fee uplift	
	Increments	
	Savings	
Additional pressures	Looked after children	1,100
	Social care pool	2,054
	Legal structure	350
	Edge of Care	1,000
	Improving social care services	1,000
	Base Budget requirement	154,810
Funding for Wish list / Pressures		1,289

The Base Net Budget requirement

Directorate	19/20 revised base £k	Pressures £k	New Initiatives £k	Savings £k	Base Budget £k
Adults and Communities	53,965	2,717	200	(600)	56,282
Social care pool			2,054		2,054
Children and families	27,185	714	3,100	(300)	30,699
Economy and Place	27,594	1,364	1,070	(873)	29,155
Corporate Services	15,086	169	425	(77)	15,603
Total Directorate	123,830	4,964	6,849	(1,850)	133,793
Central	22,771	91	(56)	(500)	22,306
Total Net Budget	146,601	5,055	6,793	(2,350)	156,099

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Childrens and families

	19/20 revised base £k	Savings £k	Looked after children £k	Edge of care £k	Improving social care services £k	Inflation pressures £k	Total £k
Proposed budget	27,185	(300)	1,100	1,000	1,000	714	30,699

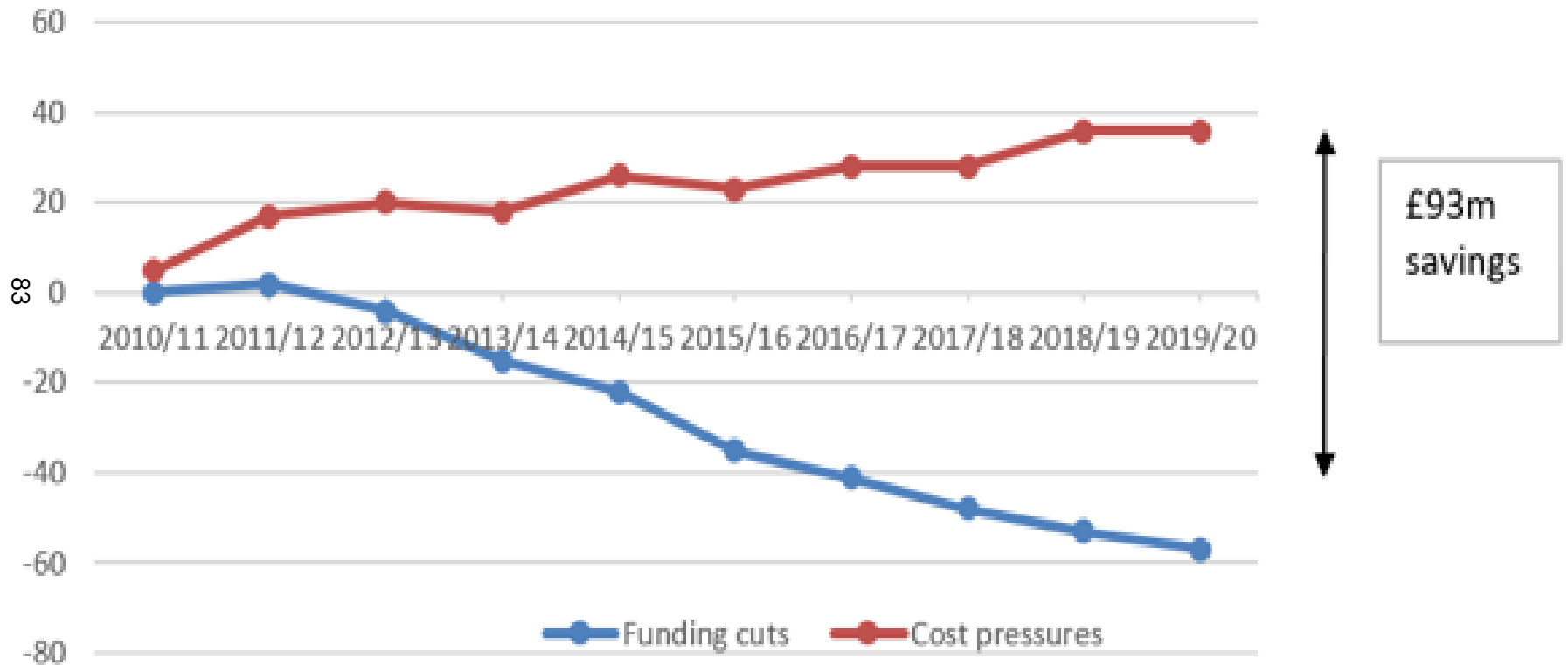
Childrens capital request

Scheme	Description	Current Capital Programme £000	Total 21/22 £000	Capital receipt funding £000	Total Request £000
Brookfield School	Improvement project seeking to achieve higher school buildings compliance, more robust fire evacuation buildings compliance, the release of a council owned split site facility at Symonds Street, the capacity to deliver the full statutory curriculum and improved accommodation.	2,744.0	1,195.0	1,195.0	1,195.0
Peterchurch Primary School	A replacement primary school for Peterchurch including all teaching and support spaces, including playground and playing field, necessary for it to function as a full one form entry school. The facility will include for the provision of a nursery and continued use of the swimming pool	5,500.0	5,353.0	5,353.0	5,353.0
Total		8,244.0	6,548.0	6,548.0	6,548.0

2020/21 Assumptions

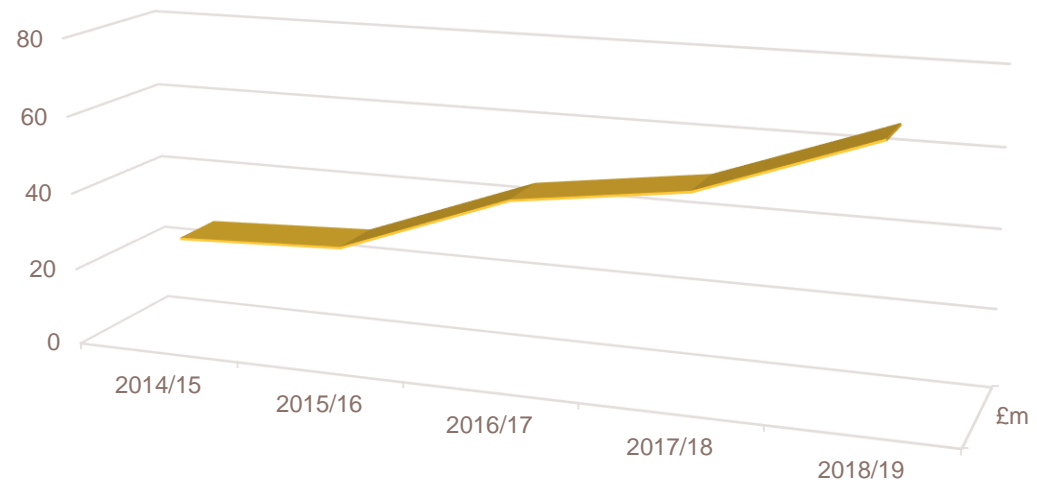
- 4% increase in Council Tax (2% general, 2% Adults Social Care) Band D = £1,575.29 increase of £1.17 per week;
- Improved better care fund (ibcf) £5.7m (£4.5m Adults and £1.2m new schemes);
- Public Health grant of £9.2m, ring fence to continue;
- ⁸ The Governments proposed local government settlement for 2020/21 included;
- Business rate reform and fair funding review delayed;
- The savings for 2020/21 outlined in the MTFS agreed in Feb 2019 are delivered;
- 200 additional new homes above assumed growth in new homes included in MTFS :

Savings achieved/required from 2010/11 to 2019/20 (cumulative) £m



Where we are...

earmarked reserves



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- Earmarked reserves

- These include unspent grants (e.g. Dedicated Schools Grant £8.9m)
- Established for specific future commitment
- Expected to total £66.7m as at 31.3.19
- Cabinet to review annually, last reviewed in Oct 2019

Charges per month (average Band D property)
2019/20 Monthly Council Tax receipt

** Daily life **	£'s
* Bin collections and Environment	13,72
* Roads, bridges and care of public spaces	7,35
* Schools and education	104,61
* Buses and community transport	6,39
* Libraries, records and customer services	1,30
** Looking after adults **	
* Older People in residential/nursing care	13,28
* Older people supported at home	9,17
* Disabled adults	27,55
* Lifestyles services (substance abuse, sexual health)	2,64
* Health improvement (Public Health nursing, health checks, smoking cessation)	5,61
* Housing	0,52
** Looking after children **	
* Child protection	4,72
* Children in care	15,19
* Children with special needs	3,53
** Local government running costs **	
* Election, governance and legal services	3,24
* Directors & Staff costs	0,65
* Organisational administration	1,41
* IT, Transactions and billing (Hoople)	5,19
* Insurance and property maintenance	5,08
* Capital finance - Debt repayment	7,35
* Capital finance - Interest payments	7,20
** Economic growth **	
* Economic development and regeneration	1,27
* Broadband - rural rollout	0,13
* Planning	2,42
	249,52

** VOUCHER **	
** Other income to supplement council tax **	
* Investment Property income	-2,92
* Car parking	-5,33
* Planning	-2,10
* Capital finance - Interest received	-2,01
* Public Health grant	-7,70
* National Education funding (schools)	-103,24

TOTAL TO PAY (per month)	£126,22

MORE INFORMATION AT	
WWW.HEREFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK/COUNCILTAX	
01/04/19 09:00 1234 23 42	

Current spending - Till Receipt

	20-21 £s		20-21 £s
** Daily life **		** Local government running costs **	
* Bin collections and Environment	13.87	* Election, governance and legal services	3.50
* Roads, bridges and care of public spaces	6.97	* Directors & Staff costs	0.56
* Schools and education	99.16	* Organisational administration	1.39
* Buses and community transport	5.97	* IT, Transactions and billing (Hoople)	5.25
* Libraries, records and customer services	1.22	* Insurance and property maintenance	4.84
** Looking after Adults **		* Capital finance - Debt repayment	6.97
* Older People in residential / nursing care	14.39	* Capital finance - Interest payments	9.57
* Older people supported at home	9.89	** Economic growth **	
* Disabled adults	28.92	* Economic development and regeneration	1.74
* Lifestyles services (substance abuse, sexual health)	2.84	* Broadband - rural rollout	0.15
* Health improvement (Public Health nursing, health checks, smoking cessation)	5.67	* Planning	0.35
* Housing	0.53		246.32
** Looking after children **		Income that supplements council tax	
* Child protection	4.29	* Investment Property income	(2.94)
* Children in care	14.97	* Car parking	(5.42)
* Children with special needs	3.31	* Capital finance - Interest received	(2.01)
		* Public Health grant	(7.70)
		* National Education funding	(96.98)
			131.27

Children and families

National

91% of LAs spent more than planned for in 2017/18; 93% predicted for 2018/19

LAC numbers – increased by 10% in four years nationally to 2018

CP numbers – 2018 biggest increase nationally in last four years; numbers have increased by 84% in last decade

LGA – by 2020 there will be a £2billion funding gap in children's services due to rising demand

2018 – spend on children's services the fastest growing area of council spend in the country; spend on looked after children growing at a faster rate than the overall rate (9% in one year vs 6.7% overall)

Recent DfE figures note that the number of unborn recorded within total number of children in need nationally has almost trebled in last eight years

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Herefordshire

1 in 5 living in poverty; increase in vulnerable children; increase in children with special educational needs, increase in fixed term exclusions

CP numbers varied significantly over number of years but higher rate than nationally over last four years

LAC numbers – far higher than statistical neighbours, rate of new entrants is coming down but still relatively high

Early Help – from 500 early help assessments in 2018 to 1,200 in 2019

Contextual Safeguarding – child exploitation, county lines

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Section 20s conversion



Herefordshire
Children and
Young People's
Partnership

Giving children and young people a great start in life

Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2019 - 2024

By 2024 Herefordshire children and young people will:



Be SAFE FROM HARM

Be safe with others

We will increase our early help and social care support; we will work together to make clear decisions so you receive the right support at the right time

You will live with supportive families and have a better understanding of healthy and positive relationships

Feel safer

You will know how to keep safe where you live so that you are confident when you go out



Be AMAZING!

Have a great start in life

We will support you to have a great start in life and to overcome barriers to your achievement

Be better prepared for adulthood

You will receive quality guidance on careers to help you make informed choices.

Have better chances of success

You will have more opportunities to develop the skills you will need for the world of work



Be HEALTHY

Lead a healthier lifestyle

You will have good information and support to help you keep active and eat healthily

Have healthier teeth

You and your family will receive clear advice about the importance of good dental health.

Be confident to talk about mental health

You will have better support to meet your emotional and mental health needs



Be PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Live in a happier community

With your help, we will tackle discrimination and ensure everyone feels valued in our community

Be more influential

We will work with you so that you are involved in decision making in our community and to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan

This plan is owned by all agencies, working alongside children, young people, families and communities across Herefordshire to provide the right support at the right time



Vision

Keeping children and young people safe and giving them a great start in life

Core purpose

Safety and well-being
All children and young people are protected from harm, both physical and mental

High standards
All children and young people can access high-quality provision and achieve their potential

Equity
Access to education and training is fair. All vulnerable children and young people receive extra support to overcome barriers to their achievement

Successful transition to adult life
Young people embark on their chosen career path at 19+ with the qualifications, skills and character to contribute to the local, regional and national economy

Priorities

1 Drive sustainable school improvement

- Support schools' improvement in teaching and learning and leadership practice, under the direction of the Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership (HSIP)*
- Work collaboratively with NLEs (national leaders in education), teaching schools and HSIP both on plans to recruit and retain suitable staff and to ensure there is high quality professional development which meets identified areas of need
- Align council statutory functions and IT systems so that schools and settings can access the support they need to be set up for success
- Learn from best practice nationally and get the most out of national initiatives for Herefordshire

2 Strengthen leadership

- Support governors and external agencies such as DfE, RSC's office and Ofsted to prevent under-performance and to help all schools and settings improve

3 Embed clear accountability

- Provide leaders, especially governors, with clear information to help them to hold schools and settings to account
- Develop existing risk assessment procedures to include post-16 so that there is a clear understanding of performance across all phases

4 Support and protect vulnerable children

- Champion fair access to education and training for vulnerable children and young people and challenge and support practice
- Improve existing partnership working with multi-agencies so that there is a joined up approach to support for children and young people, particularly around their mental health and on issues such as county lines
- Review our strategy to improve SEN and disabilities provision
- Work with external partners, such as the Home Office to protect children and young people from radicalisation

5 Develop the early years strategy

- Create an approach that supports the autonomy of early years settings and providers, particularly around workforce development

6 Deliver Herefordshire's Schools Capital Investment Strategy

- Deliver 249 new places at primary and 816 at secondary to meet demand
- Complete improvements to the school estate, including builds at Marlbrook, Brookfield, Peterchurch and the 16-19 SEN free school

7 Focus on the 16-19 education and skills agenda

- Develop provision in technical level qualifications so that outcomes match those at A-level
- Adapt NEEs strategy so that the number of young people in education or employment with training is well above national average
- Champion employability by working with schools, employers and FE providers on a county careers strategy which complements a broad, empowering, creative curriculum
- Link to the Marches Skills strategy and create new opportunities for young people in Herefordshire through, for example, apprenticeships and NMITE

Principles

Children and young people first

High expectation for every child

Supported autonomy for schools and settings

Top quartile performance

Impact measure: is the strategy leading to improvements in outcomes for children and young people?

DfE - Department for Education, RSC - Regional Schools Commissioner, NMITE - New Model in Technology and Engineering

* see HSIP delivery model

Safeguarding and Family Support Development Plan 2019/20

Vision

Keeping children and young people safe and giving them a great start in life

Goals

Resilient families

Strengthening families through our 'early help' and 'edge of care' offers

Children and young people first

Ensuring the child's voice is heard. Taking direct action when children are at risk of significant harm

High quality service and practice

Exploring all opportunities to support children and young people to remain outside of the care system

Positive futures

Achieving permanency for children at the earliest point possible. Ensuring looked after children and care leavers receive support which will help them effectively transition into adulthood

Priorities

1. Strengthen leadership

- Enable the workforce to take responsibility and manage risks appropriately
- Ensure there is a clear and shared understanding of thresholds across partner agencies so that children are referred appropriately to the MASH
- Develop practice that is integrated, inter-disciplinary and cross-agency
- Ensure sound decision-making so LAC placements are stable and residential care placements and community foster placements are explored, where appropriate
- Raise awareness of emerging issues for the county such as county lines, sexual exploitation and radicalisation
- Develop an 'edge of care' service which is clearly understood by all partner agencies
- Commission services to meet Herefordshire's safeguarding profile

Impact measure:

Is the Safeguarding and Family Support Development Plan leading to improvements in outcomes for children and young people?

2. Improve the quality of social work practice

- Support social work practice through the 'Signs of Safety' social work model so there are rapid improvements in:
 - Consistent application of thresholds throughout the system
 - Quality and consistency of case recording
 - Quality and timeliness of assessments
 - Helping children understand their journey through life story work
 - How graded care training is used actively in neglect cases
 - Quality and timeliness of case and worker supervision
 - Decision making particularly around the initiation of strategy and section 47 enquiries
- Develop a robust Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service
- Develop a whole service performance system
- Empower staff to deliver our objectives

3. Retain and attract high quality social care staff

- Develop career pathways for social workers and high quality recruitment and retention packages
- Develop comprehensive offer to recruitment and progression of ASYE's
- Ensure worker caseloads are acceptable
- Ensure the right case in right place
- Undertake regular case and worker supervision
- Embed a high quality training programme
- Review and implement proposals for recognition and reward for 'hard to fill' roles
- Ensure effective and regular communication and engagement with staff and partners
- Develop the culture to deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families

4. Governance, performance and accountability

- Ensure management oversight and grip through proactive scrutiny and challenge which prevents drift and delay in our work to support children
- Embed a performance improvement culture
- Improve performance data and IT systems so leaders are better able to be held and hold others to account

To inspire, support and challenge each other to enable all children and young people to thrive

#buildingbetterfutures

Current Year pressure

Overspend on placements at October 2019 was £2,232k and this is expected to rise in future months.

The biggest pressures are:

£000s

Description	19/20 Budget	Forecast	Forecast Variance	Budgeted Placements	Current Placements
Residential Placements	2,983	3,672	689	17	19
Supported Accommodation External	1,319	1,942	623	14	28
Complex Needs Pooled Budget*	1,498	2,106	608	n/a fixed budget	
Agency Fostering	3,315	3,468	153	74	83
In-House-Fostering	2,700	2,829	129	148	153
	11,815	14,017	2,202	253	283

* Contribution to Complex Needs budget is fixed and the above is 3/7th of the total budget/spend/variance with the local authority contribution being matched by the Dedicated Schools Grant and the balance by the NHS through the CCG

Causes of Current Year Pressure

Pressure this year is being caused by:

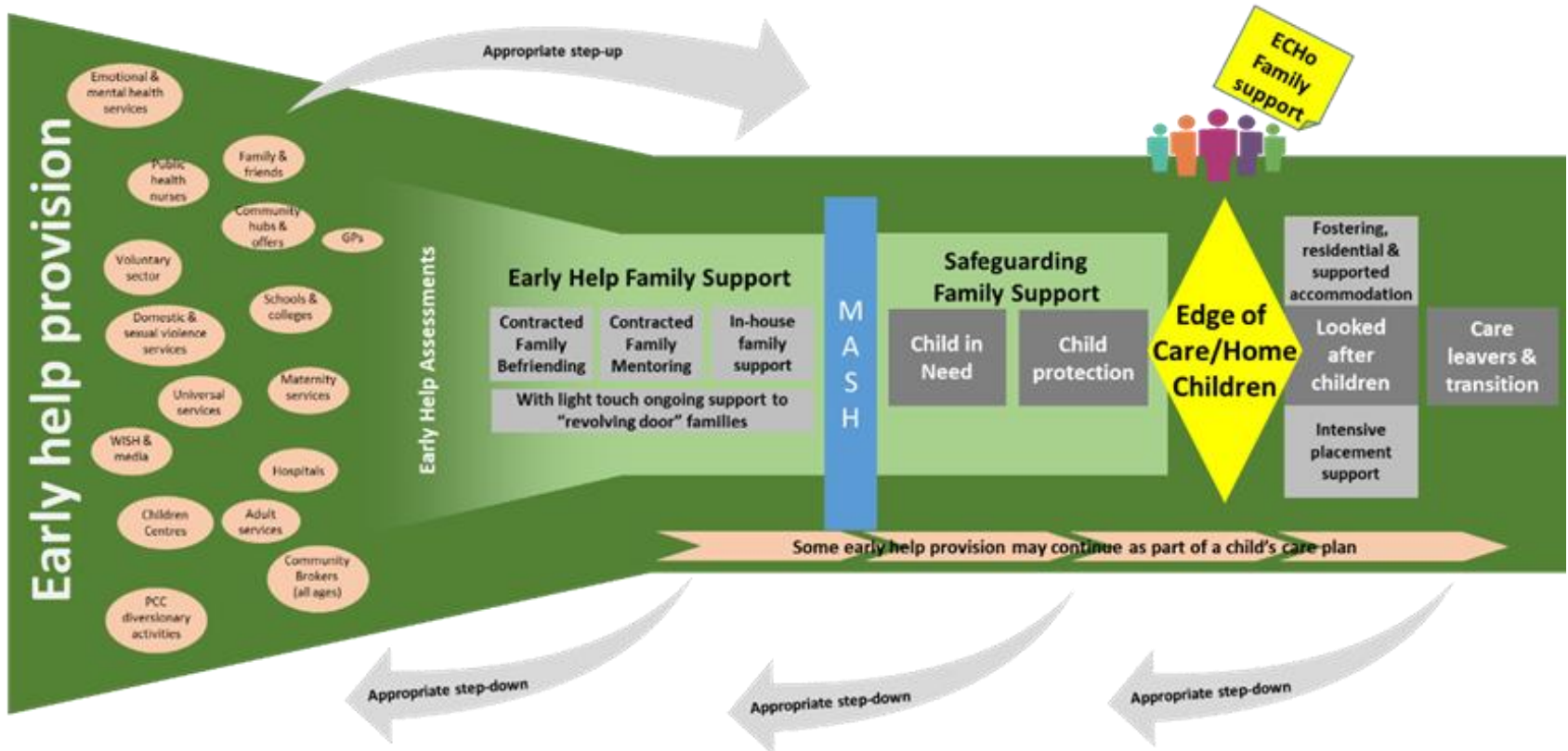
- Ongoing increase in LAC numbers;
- Increase in young people placed in supported accommodation (risk of exploitation, emotional and mental health needs, mother and baby). Based on current LAC population continued upwards trend is likely in future years;
- Increase in supported accommodation placements for over 18s – an increase from one 19 year old in April 2018 to nine aged 19-22 in October 19;
- Increases in level of support required;
- Limited supply for local placements and increase in higher costs for placements:

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Edge of Care investment

Herefordshire's safeguarding children system

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Proposed areas for investment

Title	Narrative	Revenue costs				Capital investment	Capital Bid £000s	
		2020-21 £000s	2021-22 £000s	2022-23 £000s	2023-24 £000s			
1	Assisted living	Implementing technology enabled living (TEL) at scale	Funded from reserves				x	1,500
2	Super-hubs	Super hubs to support communities. Capital investment plus resource to manage and develop community engagement.	200				x	2,000
3	Tourism	Tourism - Destination Business Improvement District (BID development)						
		Tourism - Marketing and Visit Herefordshire website budget allocation						
		Fund for staffing to deliver the Leominster Heritage Action Zone project	200	40	40		x	3,800
4	Community Engagement	Creating a greater understanding within services of what will make a positive difference to people's lives. Resource for staff and engagement promotion	50	50	50	50		
5	Employment Land & Incubation Space	The acquisition of employment land would facilitate the expansion or relocation of local businesses potentially leading to a higher business rates income and the generation of more and better paid jobs. delivery options, legal implications, market assessments, constraints.	100	100	100		x	13,631
6	Leominster Urban Extension	Completing the design, approvals and business case for the Leominster Southern Transport Package would result in the council having a definitive infrastructure package, including sustainable measures.	Deferred				x	
7	Core strategy review	Full review, assessed needs of the county. Staff resource and evidence based research. Including transport options for cycling and walking and new schemes such as Eastern Link	600	500	500	550		-
8	New models of Housing	Undertake evaluation of directly investing in the development and delivery of new homes including homes for private rent, market sale and affordable housing. Cost for a consultant to develop options.	Funded from reserves				x	800
9	Public transport service	Revenue budget to protect existing bus services and frequencies	100	100			x	8,500
10	Council Tax charging policy	Variation to the local council tax discount scheme. The policy decision change could increase the council tax income.	(56)	(100)	(100)	(100)		
11	Digital – Transformation, infrastructure and knowledge management	More services delivered digitally including linked to back office systems. More people using the internet to access services. Digital Transformation Unit – to really drive digital transformation it needs a dedicated team to work with services to change how they operate		400	280	280		
		Fibre network across Herefordshire for businesses to be able to trade globally. Households to be connected to support learning, communication, access to services and aid health and well being. Greater adoption and exploitation of the existing and planned fibre network.	25	25	25	25		
		Work to integrate data, internally between service areas within the council and alongside partners (such as health), and application of artificial intelligence, will allow the opportunity for a better understanding of our residents and allow us maximise preventative opportunities for individuals, families and communities, and inform decision making.		500	150	150		-
12	Energy models and green energy efficiency	Renewable heating technologies: Biomass (wood fuelled) boilers, Biomass pellet stoves with integrated boilers providing space heating, Ground to water heat pumps, Air to water heat pumps, Solar thermal panels	Manage within existing budget					
13	Climate change	Continue natural flood management work within the 7 (current) catchment areas beyond March 2021 and extend the offer and grant funding all across Herefordshire	70	70				
Total of Revenue			1,289	1,685	1,045	955	0	28,731



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Monday 25 November 2019
Title of report:	Update on reducing the number of looked after children (LAC)
Report by:	Director of Children and Families

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To provide an update and review progress towards delivery of the Looked After Children Reduction strategy. To report on areas of progress, delay, and future planning.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **the committee review progress made in delivering the looked after children's reduction strategy and determine any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive regarding action to secure further improvement.**

Alternative options

1. There is no alternative to the recommendations, it is a function of the committee to make reports or recommendation to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.

Key considerations

2. The looked after children strategy was detailed in the Children's Wellbeing MTFs (medium term financial strategy) update report; looked after children, written in September 2017. It went to cabinet member briefing on 7th November 2017 as part of the budget discussion (Appendix 1). Following this there was a series of meetings of scrutiny members considering looked after children cost reduction, and reported to the committee on 29th November 2018.
3. The purpose of the report was to outline measures to be taken to reduce Herefordshire's disproportionately high number of looked after children. In September 2017, there were 308 looked after children. To have been in accordance with statistical neighbours the number of looked after children would have been 215 (list of statistical neighbours and regional neighbours in appendix 2)
4. From 2014 to date, the number of looked after children has risen, and continues to be disproportionality higher than both regional and statistical neighbours.
5. At the end of October 2019 the number of looked after children in Herefordshire stood at 350, 95 children per 10,000. To be in accordance with regional neighbours Herefordshire's looked after population would be approximately 78 children per 10,000, giving a number looked after children of 282. At present, Herefordshire's number of looked after children is 68 above this.
6. To be in accordance with statistical neighbours where the looked after child rate on average is 53 per 10,000, Herefordshire's looked after child rate would be 191. Herefordshire's looked after child population is 159 above this.
7. Attached to this report is data as to Herefordshire's performance in numbers of children entering and exiting care against statistical and regional neighbours from 2014 to the point comparator data is available. (Appendix 3). This report shows that every year from 2014 for which comparator data is available Herefordshire had more children entering the looked after system than both regional and statistical neighbours. It also shows that every year in Herefordshire up to 2018/19, more children have entered the looked after system in Herefordshire than have exited.
8. The desired outcome of the work contained in the report of September 2017 has not been achieved. The activity to reduce looked after numbers was outlined as follows:
 - To support the delivery of MTFs savings social workers and their managers have identified 80 looked after children subject of a care order for whom an alternative permanence option through reunification or Special Guardianship Order (SGO) *may* be the most appropriate outcome. Both options involve completing an updated assessment to recommend the most appropriate care plan for the child, ratifying this decision at a multi-agency LAC review, agreeing the SGO/reunification plan, making an application to Court and proceedings to determine the outcome. Detail of steps to be taken to achieve this was then outlined in the report.
9. Achievements made as outlined in the September 2017 paper are as follows;
 - Assessments of the children identified in the cohort of 80 have been completed
 - Additional staff were successfully recruited to achieve this
 - Special Guardianship is now considered at an earlier stage in planning for children due to the promotion of SGO as a viable option to secure permanence for a child.

10. Certain barriers to achieving permanence for children via court ordered Special Guardianship orders were identified during the work undertaken with carers. These were the practical difficulties some carers experienced in organising and supervising contact between the children in their care and the children's parents, and the financial disincentive faced by carers in becoming special guardians.
11. These barriers have been addressed by expanding the contact service to enable contact to be facilitated by contact workers. This commenced in August 2018, and by the Council decision for payment to special guardians to mirror that of payment to foster carers. Both of these are seen as very positive steps in promoting special guardianship.
12. At the start of this work, there was one team manager in the looked after children service, and it became evident this was inadequate to manage both this strand of work and the other work entailed in meeting the needs of all children within that service area. To address this, the management capacity in the looked after children service has been expanded to accommodate a second team manager, who took up post in July 2019.
13. It still remains the objective within children and families to reduce the number of looked after children, where it is safe to do so, by examining alternative options for them. To enable a much more comprehensive review of children who are looked after, they have been broken down into cohorts as follows;
14. As at 9 October there were 350 looked after children; and a piece of work has been completed to group them into categories;
 - 30 children have been looked after for less than 12 months, and therefore their planning is still in progress so they have not been included in this process;
 - 92 children have a permanence plan agreed (not adoption) and are long term matched, meaning their long term permanence has been secured and their plans at this stage are not being reviewed.
 - 46 children we are pursuing special guardianship orders, these applications are at different stages with some applications being progressed by our legal department and others requiring a child and family assessment to determine if a special guardianship order is in the child's best interest. There is a clear timetable for each of these 46 children which is being overseen by bi monthly meetings, which commenced in July 2019, chaired by the assistant director safeguarding and family support.
 - For 13 children, we are pursuing reunification to a parent or member of the child's extended family or network. Progress is overseen in the bi monthly meeting referenced above.
 - 19 children are living at home under Placement with Parents (PWP) regulations. These children are subject to care orders made by the court, so have at some point met a threshold of significant harm. In these cases we are pursuing or are likely to pursue a revocation of the care order. These too are overseen in the bi monthly meetings referenced above.
15. We have a number of children where the likely plan proposed is adoption. 17 children with a placement order, of which 5 are not yet placed for adoption. We have 21 other children where we are in care proceedings or already have a care order where the

potential plan is adoption, but are awaiting confirmation of a final decision from the court process.

16. This leaves a cohort of children who whilst looked after do not have a long term match and who do not have a plan for adoption. To review these cases a number of challenge sessions have been arranged, commencing 25th November, to ascertain the most appropriate outcome for each child. The numbers are as follows:
 - 29 children within AC team 1,
 - 47 children within LAC team 2,
 - 24 children within the 16+ team
 - 12 children within the Children with Disabilities team.
17. Each of these children's circumstances are being reviewed against a series of questions to ascertain if consideration should be given to a plan of reunification. The questions against which each child's circumstances are being considered is detailed in Appendix 4.
18. Reducing the number of looked after children by enabling children to exit the looked after system where it is safe and appropriate to do so is one element of the approach required. The other is to ensure all steps are taken to enable children to live within their family network and ensure children do not become looked after until all viable options have been considered.
19. To this end, considerable extra resource has been deployed into the Early Help service, to enable children to receive a service at the earliest opportunity, to prevent problems escalating. The numbers of early help assessments have risen month on month for the past ten months, evidencing intervention at this early stage.
20. 15. Alternatives to care panel was established in September 2018, which reviews all cases where a child may need to be looked after, either via Section 20, or via issuing care proceedings and placing the issue before the court to seek an interim care order. Whilst this has not impacted on the reduction of numbers of looked after children as a whole, this has reduced the number of children looked after under Section 20, and is ensuring any child accommodated under S20 is regularly reviewed with legal input into that review.
21. The Panel is also ensuring only in cases where it is evidenced that a child is at risk of significant harm and that threshold has been established are care proceedings initiated. Legal advice is sought on this via legal attending panel in every case. A review of all 33 children becoming looked after during the months of August, September and October 2019 has been completed. 27 of these children (81%) have been looked after following issuing of care proceedings and the court making an interim care order having been satisfied the threshold of significant harm has been met. 2 children are section 20 accommodated, but we now intend to issue care proceedings as we cannot be assured of their safety and wellbeing should they return to their family home and there are no extended family who can offer a viable alternative, despite effort to achieve this. 2 children remain S20 accommodated with a plan of returning to the family home, 1 child is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.
22. Following the court granting an interim care order, an Initial permanency planning meeting is convened and chaired by the case progression officer at the earliest opportunity to consider all permanency options for the child/ren. During this meeting all kinship carers who may be able to care for the child should return to the birth parents not be viable are identified and assessment can begin, with special guardianship considered

as a viable option at this early stage of planning. A review permanency planning meeting is then held to ensure all plans are on track and care planning taking place effectively to avoid any drift and delay. The impact of this should be seen within the next three to six months as these cases approach final hearing.

23. Plans are underway to establish a third assessment team and to “shift” the family support team to this part of the service to offer intensive family support to children and families at the Child in Need level of intervention, to prevent escalation to child protection, a key element to this will be the embedding of family meetings to work with families at the earliest opportunity to identify support networks within families, and identify support services within communities to enable children to remain, where safe to do so, within their families and communities.
24. Approval has been given for the establishment of an edge of care service to work with families at the point of crisis to avert a child/young person being accommodated, and to work with families’ to enable children to return home in the instance they have been accommodated for a short period of time, or in that circumstances have changed for a child looked after for a lengthier period of time and reunification is a safe and feasible option.
25. Signs of safety, has been agreed as the social work intervention framework to be adopted across the county. The roll out of this commences in December 2019, the desired impact is that it will enable work with families, embed a strengths based approach across all agencies and partnerships, and focus on relationship based practice to facilitate children being brought up within their family networks where safe to do so.
26. We have recently started working with Essex County Council as performance improvement partners, authorised and supported by the Department of Education, who have completed a diagnostic of Herefordshire’s court and child protection service. Essex, as an outstanding authority who practice relationship based approach, will assist in reviewing Herefordshire practice, developing a strengths based approach, and establishing action plans to improve performance. Plans for their further involvement in assisting Herefordshire to develop services and intervention is currently in progress.

Community impact

27. In accordance with the code of corporate governance Herefordshire Council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. The council is committed to promoting a positive work culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
28. It is a council priority to ‘keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life.’ The delivery of the corporate parenting strategy contributes to the council achieving its ambitions in key strategies within the corporate plan, health and wellbeing strategy and children and young people’s plan.
29. A priority within the Corporate Parenting strategy is to reduce the number of looked after children recognising that Herefordshire’s numbers of looked after children in care is too high. This would enable resources to be focussed upon those children who need to be in care and enable those that do not need to be in care to enjoy family life without intervention from social workers.

Equality duty

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Liz Elgar, email: liz.elgar@herefordshire.gov.uk

30. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
31. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a progress report, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

32. None associated with the recommendation. If the committee determine any recommendations the executive will consider the resource implications of implementing these when formulating their response.

Legal implications

33. None associated with the recommendation. If the committee determine any recommendations the executive will consider the legal implications of implementing the recommendations when formulating their response.

Risk management

34. Children should only be looked after when this is in their best interests and the risks justify the level of intervention by social care. The impact for children of being looked after outside of their family when they could be supported to live with their family is profound as is the long-term involvement of social workers.
35. The annual cost of looked after children is significant with an average cost per annum of £51,000 for each child. Therefore ensuring that the right children are looked after is critical. The costs of children being looked after can vary considerably, dependent on whether a child is placed in in-house fostering, independent fostering services via a fostering agency, or in a residential setting. High cost of placement for looked after children presents a risk to both budget setting and budget management.
36. There is a risk that, in maintaining children at home in neglectful and unsafe circumstances, children can suffer significant harm. The need to maintain children at home must be balanced against their safety both immediately, but also in the long term.

Consultees

- None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Looked after children report September 2017

Appendix 2 – Regional and Statistical Neighbours

Appendix 3 – Update on reducing the number of looked after children comparisons

Appendix 4 – Challenge session LAC review questions

Background papers

None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) – A public law order made under the Children’s Act 1989 for children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.

Section 20, Children’s Act 1989 – Section 20 of the Children’s Act sets out how a local authority can provide accommodation for a child within their area if the child is in need of it.

Edge of Care – Service targeted at providing an intensive package of support to families in order to change their lives to avoid the need for costly statutory intervention where possible.

Reunification Plan – A plan to return a looked after child to the family.

Permanence Plan – A plan to provide a secure, stable and loving family to support children through childhood and beyond.

PWP Regulations 1991 – These regulations provide for the accommodation of children in the care of the local authority with a parent, person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility.

Care Order – An order which places the child under the care of the local authority.

Kinship Carers – Kinship care can be in any situation where a child is living full-time with grandparents or another relative.

Signs of safety – An integrated framework that sets out how to carry out child intervention work.

Appendix 1 - Children's Wellbeing MTFS update report: looked after children

As part of the Council's MTFS, Children's Services are committed to delivering savings, one of our key savings strands is the plan to reduce our 'looked after' population.

The current number of looked after children is 308 at September 2017. This is significantly higher than might be expected when compared with Herefordshire's statistical neighbours. A figure of 215 might be expected if Herefordshire had the average rate of its statistical neighbours. There has been no evidence gathered to suggest that Herefordshire has a significantly different and more challenging level of need compared to its statistical neighbours.

Throughout 16/17, we have developed a number of work streams to support this reduction, which is significantly more complex than the simultaneous reduction in child protection numbers we and partner agencies achieved last year. Since September 2016 we have:

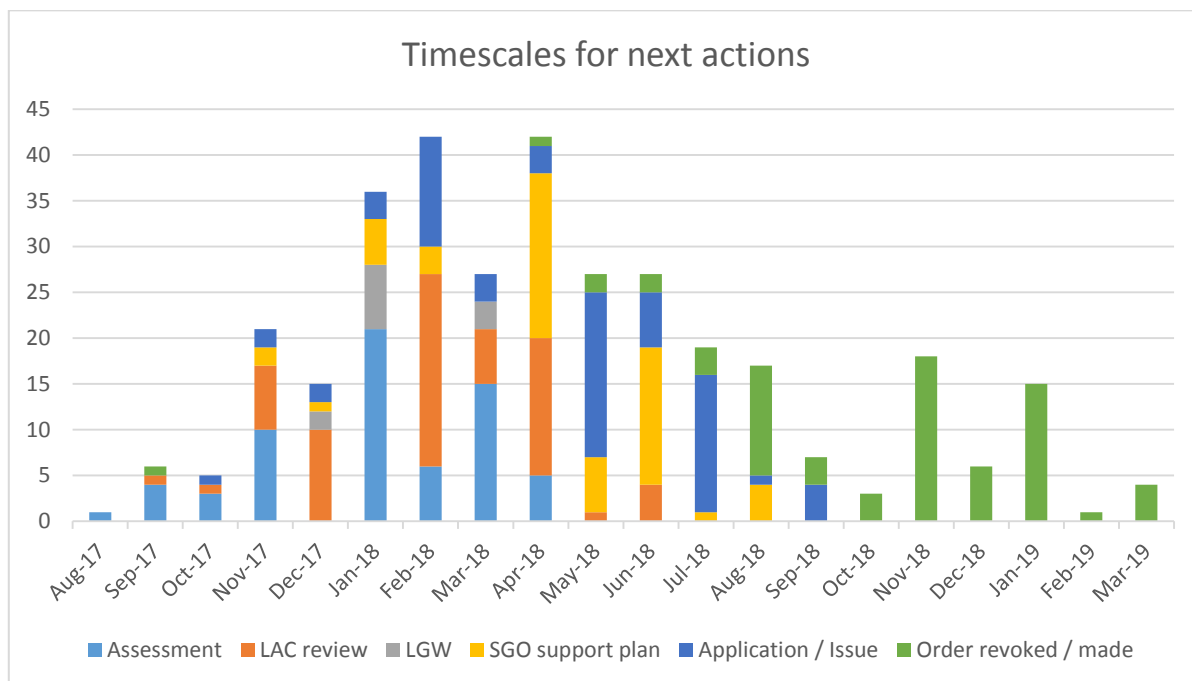
- Established a tracker system for monitoring and forecasting children due to leave care
- Introduced a threshold of care panel which has successfully reduced our admissions to care to below the regional average
- Applied to Court to revoke care orders for children "placed with parents" in appropriate cases. So far 5 care orders have been successfully revoked and a further 11 children have been supported to return home.
- Achieved Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) for 4 children
- Worked across our Service to develop a consistent understanding of the practice expectations, opportunities, barriers and solutions associated with progressing SGO's
- Completed assessments on 5 children that recommend their care plan is changed to an SGO

To support the delivery of MTFS savings social workers and their managers have identified 80 looked after children subject of a care order for whom an alternative permanence option through reunification or Special Guardianship Order (SGO) *may* be the most appropriate outcome. Both options involve completing an updated assessment to recommend the most appropriate care plan for the child, ratifying this decision at a multi-agency LAC review, agreeing the SGO/reunification plan, making an application to Court and proceedings to determine the outcome.

The table below sets out the steps required, the timescales, risks and actions to mitigate the risks involved. It distinguishes between processes and decisions which are within the local authority's remit and those that are not.

Timescales	Work/steps required to achieve	Risks/obstacles	Actions to mitigate risks	
9 weeks	Assessment	Recruitment of 2 Social Workers as agreed in business case	1 Social Worker commenced October '17 Recruitment ongoing for second post	Decision making within our control
		Assessment will recommend SGO/ reunification if this is in child's best interests	Support to Social Workers to apply established thresholds for looked after children	
4 weeks	LAC review	The LAC review is required to endorse a change in care plan and may not agree with proposed plan	Whole system approach to promoting the advantages of permanence through SGO and reunification	Decision making within our control
8 weeks	Negotiate support plan for SGO cases	Carers need to consent and many have significant questions regarding the support available in the medium/long term	Leaflet clearly explaining support available and benefits for child and carer SGO finance policy sets out support and means test process Developing confidence and capability of workforce to negotiate support plans that meet need	Decision making not within our control
4 weeks	Application to Court	Requires carers to make application for an SGO	Social workers can assist with completing application LA will fund court fee	Decision making not within our control
26 weeks	Proceedings	Family court will prioritise cases where there are safeguarding concerns which may delay the first hearing Court directs the timetable for proceedings and any further assessments Court may not agree the application	Discussions in advance with Court, CAFCASS and our legal team to plan and prepare Social workers will be supported to prepare thoroughly and produce good quality evidence to support applications	Decision making not within our control

A case tracker has been developed to plan and monitor progress of these key tasks and when they will reasonably be achieved. The total time taken from assessment to outcome from Court for an SGO is 12 months and for reunification is 10 months. The graph below sets out the timescales for achieving tasks in each case. Any financial savings will not be realised until the Court order is revoked/made. Operational and strategic groups have been established to meet monthly and review progress on this work – problem solving and addressing obstacles.



Based on the progress against these actions the LAC population could reasonably be expected to reduce as detailed below. In forecasting this trend it has been assumed that our current rates of admission and leaving care through adoption and ageing out will remain constant. The graph shows the population forecast for 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% success rates.

		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18*	18-19*
LAC admissions		126	124	121	100	96	96
Ceasing LAC	Current practice	101	95	103	86	84	84
	Focussed reduction					10	70
LAC numbers	No change to current practice	231	256	285	303	315	317
	100% achieved						247
	75% achieved						264
	50% achieved						282
	25% achieved						300

* Indicates forecasted figures

Appendix 2 – Regional and Statistical Neighbours

West Midlands Regional Neighbours

Birmingham

Coventry

Dudley

Sandwell

Shropshire

Solihull

Staffordshire

Stoke on Trent

Telford and Wrekin

Walsall

Warwickshire

Wolverhampton

Worcestershire

Statistical Neighbours

Shropshire

Somerset

Suffolk

Wiltshire

Norfolk

East Sussex

Gloucester

Devon

Dorset

Cornwall

Appendix 3

Year	Total number children entering care	Total number children exiting care	LAC population per 10,000	Comparison with regional neighbours (average) Total, start and cease LAC count for WM / areas
2014/15 Apr'14-Mar'15	129 children 36 (/10,000 rate)	105 children 29 (/10,000 rate)	75	<p>WM Rate: 74</p> <p>WM entering : 30 (rate) Hereford rate entering : 36. +6</p> <p>SN rate : 49</p> <p>SN rate entering : 23 Hereford rate entering : 36 + 13</p> <p>WM exiting : 29 (rate) Hereford rate exiting : 29. 0</p> <p>SN rate : 49</p> <p>SN exiting : 23 (rate) Hereford rate exiting : 29 +6</p>
2015/16 Apr'15-Mar'16	117 children 32 (/10,000 rate)	103 children 29 (/10,000 rate)	79	<p>WM Rate: 73</p> <p>WM entering : 27 (rate) Hereford rate entering : 32 +5</p> <p>SN rate : 50</p> <p>SN rate entering : 23 Hereford rate entering : 32 +9</p> <p>WM exiting: 28 (rate) Hereford rate exiting : 29 +1</p> <p>SN rate : 50</p> <p>SN exiting : 23 Hereford rate exiting : 29 +6</p>

Appendix 3

<p>2016/17 Apr'16-Mar'17</p>	<p>101 children 28 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>84 children 23 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>84</p>	<p>WM rate : 75</p> <p>WM entering : 27 (rate) Hereford rate entering : 28 +1</p> <p>SN rate : 51</p> <p>SN rate entering : 22 Hereford rate entering : 28 +6</p> <p>WM exiting : 26 (rate) Hereford rate exiting : 23 -3</p> <p>SN rate : 51</p> <p>SN exiting : 22 Hereford rate exiting : 23 +1</p>
<p>2017/18 Apr'17-Mar'18</p>	<p>111 children 31 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>99 children 28 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>87</p>	<p>WM Rate: 78</p> <p>WM entering : 28 (rate) Hereford rate entering : 31 +3</p> <p>SN Rate : 54</p> <p>SN entering : 20 Hereford rate entering : 31 +11</p> <p>WM exiting : 24 (rate) Hereford rate exiting : 28 +4</p> <p>SN Rate : 54</p> <p>SN exiting : 23 Hereford rate exiting : 28 +5</p>
<p>2018/19 Apr'18-Mar'19</p>	<p>95 children 26 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>80 children 22 (/10,000 rate)</p>	<p>92 (predicted)</p>	<p>Comparator data not yet available</p>
<p>2019/20 Apr'19-Mar'19 (to end September 2019)</p>	<p>48 children (YTD)</p>	<p>42 children (YTD)</p>	<p>94 (predicted)</p>	<p>Comparator data not yet available</p>

Appendix 4 – Questions for challenge sessions

Name of child

Date of birth

Allocated social worker and team manager

Name of IRO

Question	Overview
how long has this child been looked after, in years and months?	
What were the issues that lead to LAC status?	
How many placements has this child had since becoming looked after?	
Is regular contact being maintained with family members? (if yes, please specify who and level of contact)	
Do parents or any extended family member want the child in their care? (if yes, please specify who would want to care for this child)	
Have family circumstances changed since the child came into care? If yes, what has changed?	
Has the possibility of the child returning home ever been assessed? If yes, when?	
IRO overview?	
If this case came into MASH now, would the child be removed?	



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Monday 25 November 2019
Title of report:	Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan 2019 / 2020
Report by:	Assistant director for Safeguarding and Family Support

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2019 / 2020.

The Ofsted improvement plan 2018 / 2019 was updated to the end of March 2019 at which time the process was reviewed in order to move improvement planning into the service areas for 2019-2020; the individual service plans are being reviewed and monitored through a monthly cycle with a clear indication of progress and areas of challenge.

An overall improvement plan for Safeguarding and Family Support 2019 / 2020 is attached at appendix a, to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **the committee review progress and determine any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure further improvement.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendation; it is a function of the committee to review action taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and make reports or recommendations to the executive

Key considerations

2. The Children and young people scrutiny committee received a report at their meeting on 11 March 2019 that provide an update on the progress against the Ofsted improvement plan 2018/2020.
3. The Ofsted improvement plan 2018 / 2019 (appendix b) was updated to the end of March 2019; when it was agreed that improvement planning would move into the service areas for 2019-2020 within Safeguarding and Family Support; the individual service plans are being reviewed and monitored through a monthly cycle with a clear indication of progress and areas of challenge.
4. An overall improvement plan for Safeguarding and Family Support 2019 / 2020 has been developed to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward. This includes further actions to improve the service and moves beyond the initial actions from the 2018 Ofsted inspection. The 13 remaining actions from the Ofsted improvement plan have been incorporated into the individual services plans. This is to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward and that this is embedded to take account of the cross cutting actions that all services are required to deliver against. For example the timeliness of visits and completion of both case and personal supervision.
5. The plans have been reviewed for each service area and further refinements have been made that has enhanced them; in addition further work has been undertaken to ensure that they are consistent in approach.
6. Improvements continue to be made around performance information being provided to the service areas and a process has been developed to ensure that the information is reviewed monthly and is being used across the division.
7. There has been a number of key achievements including a continued increase in the number of Early Help assessments undertaken, a reduction in the number of assessments commenced in the MASH and Assessment Teams and a further reduction in the number of re-referrals received to 16.0% against a target of not exceeding 20%.
8. Children continue to be able to participate in their looked after children reviews; this enables the child to be part of the review process that considers how things are going, whether their care plan meets their needs and whether there needs to be any changes for the future; performance in this area remains consistently good at 94%.

9. Work has been undertaken across the division in respect of ensuring that risk assessments are completed within timescales where risk of exploitation has been identified to ensure that young people receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited; it was identified that there had been a delay in completing these assessments. This is being addressed and work is being undertaken to ensure that all are completed and brought up to date.
10. Extra resource has been made available with the appointment of an additional child exploitation co-ordinator, this has been made on a 12 month basis, and will be reviewed at the 9 month point.
11. The key issues for Herefordshire children and families still remain as timeliness and quality of assessments, planning for children, timeliness and recording of visits and permanent recruitment. Recruitment to the service has experienced an improvement; we have appointed two new Heads of Service for MASH and Assessment and CP and Court who commenced in post at the end of April 2019 who will continue to drive the improvement in these areas.
12. In addition, we have recently appointed to the post of principal social worker and they will be driving the implementation of Signs of Safety over the coming months. They come into post on September 9th 2019.
13. Key operational indicators are challenging; as shown below. Some indicators have shown an improvement but others have seen a decline which we are monitoring closely. The timeliness of visits continues to be a challenge against a target of 95% compliance.
14. Up to the end of September 2019 CP visits were at 86% (this is an increase from 71% in May 2019), CIN visits were at 72% (a further improvement of 1% on May 2019) and LAC visits were at 85% (a slight improvement compared to 81% in May 2019). Supervision is a challenge across a number of services and in particular this has been a significant issue within the children with disabilities team (reported 23% at end of September); this has been addressed by the head of service who has been assured that there should be an improvement in October 2019.
15. We have seen improvement in the Independent Reviewing Officers being effective in ensuring that care plans are appropriate to meet needs and ensuring that they do not drift; current year to date data is reporting at 80% against a target of 90% having at least 2 IRO oversights recorded within a 12 month period.
16. We were inspected by Ofsted in June 2018 and had a focused visit in January 2019. The findings have been reflected in Herefordshire's self-assessment that has been reviewed and revised (appendix c).
17. There has been improvement in the interaction of senior managers with staff; the assistant director and director regularly work in different social care offices and hold regular drop in sessions for staff; in addition heads of service work regularly in team areas to provide a more informal way for enabling staff to raise any issues.
18. The quality and purposefulness of management oversight and decision making has improved with revised panel arrangements now in place and embedded. This provides a robust challenge to requests for children to enter the looked after system, to commencing pre proceedings and issuing care proceedings, and looks at appropriate solutions and alternatives.

19. Operational managers receive weekly activity reports and a monthly information booklet that contains significant amounts of data that enable the HOS and their managers to track performance of their teams (appendix d). These reports have been developed and put in place since September 2018, they provide a range of detailed weekly reports and monthly scorecards. These are regularly reviewed to improve the accuracy and usefulness of reports to aid improvement in social work practice and outcomes for children and young people. This is also reviewed at the AD/HOS meeting so that senior leaders are able to challenge each other. This information is then used to inform service improvement plans
20. Because of our improved approach to performance, children are receiving more timely visits. Child Protection visits are at 86% in time in September 2019, compared to 69% in September 2018. Looked after Children visits are 85% compared to 65%. Child in Need visits are recorded as 72% compared to 41%. Our timeliness of visits is still not as good as it should be, despite an improving picture. An aspirational target of 95% from 2019/20 has been set and teams are working towards meeting this.
21. We welcomed the visit of the DfE National Advisor for care leavers who gave positive feedback on Herefordshire's approach as well as providing valuable comment on what we could improve. The areas for improvement have been reviewed by a senior management group, chaired by the Chief Executive and by the council's management board and an operational action plan has been endorsed, which is incorporated into our improvement work and plans. Within this our Corporate parenting board will be strengthened. It currently meets bi-monthly to understand the experience of our looked after children and care leavers, to scrutinise performance data and to oversee the implementation of our corporate parenting strategy.
22. The council has introduced revised decision making in all council reports, requiring the impact of corporate parenting to be considered as a result and is also in the process of agreeing council tax support for care leavers. Training for members to reflect on their corporate parenting role is ongoing.
23. We have established a new approach within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to address how contacts and referrals are being processed has been put in place from the beginning of October 2018.
24. We now have an Early Help Coordinator in MASH to ensure that children are managed in the correct part of the system and stepped up and down appropriately according to their identified needs.
25. We have increased management capacity and have an additional Head of Service to concentrate on MASH/Assessment. We have increased team manager capacity and have an additional team manager in both the looked after children and child protection court teams, and have established additional management capacity in the 16+ service.
26. We have recruited additional family support workers to provide capacity and take some tasks from social workers. We have a number of initiatives to attract, recruit and retain social workers into Herefordshire. We continue to encourage newly qualified social workers into Herefordshire to complete their first year of social work practice (ASYE). A social work apprentice scheme is currently receiving applications and is due to commence in February 2019. A one off payment to agency social workers wishing to join Herefordshire as a permanent worker is in place, as is a payment to Herefordshire social workers should they recommend a permanent worker to apply for a post who is then appointable. We have commissioned the services of an agency to progress an urban to rural scheme, targeting

social workers who may want to relocate to a more rural area. There is agreed market forces supplement payments for social workers, and an annual training allowance.

27. The area where there is still a reliance, above that which we would want to have, on agency workers, is the Court/CP service. Agency workers can leave with giving only a week's notice. This is disruptive to children and families, and impacts hugely on the consistency of practice in this area of the service.
28. We have increased business support capacity to increase the availability of business support for convening and minuting of meetings therefore releasing social work time from these tasks.
29. We have recruited additional contact workers to clear the back log of life story book work and maintain completion of life story book work, particularly for children who are going to be adopted; the quality of life story work has improved following the recruitment of additional contact workers to clear the backlog and to maintain the completion of the life story book work. We have also appointed a case progression officer to add additional capacity to ensuring improvement in care planning, timeliness and outcomes for children.
30. Alternatives to care panel commenced on the 25th September 2018 which provides a much more robust challenge to requests for children to enter the looked after system and looks at appropriate solutions for cases. These are chaired by the Assistant Director, with Heads of Service also being directly involved in individual case discussions and decisions. Legal services attend this panel to enable clear, consistent approaches.
31. We have revised our quality assurance approach to enable greater learning and improvement in practice, focusing on specific audit work. We have revised our audit tool, and established a framework which will close the loop of learning, and will be reviewing its implementation on a monthly basis. We have established bi-monthly learning workshops which all social workers and family support workers are encouraged to attend.
32. We undertake a monthly programme of case file audits. On a quarterly basis we analyse findings to identify themes and priorities for learning and improvement. In addition we regularly undertake a range of thematic audit work informed by agreed priorities and findings are considered by our senior management team to inform our development plan. These have included an audit of practice of cases in PLO, supervision, effectiveness of our audit programme, and admissions to care.

Community impact

33. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting the progress on actions completed and outcomes achieved.
34. The successful implementation of the action plan will continue to bring about further improvement towards achieving the council's priorities of keeping children and young people safe and giving them a great start in life and enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives; improving access to learning opportunities at all levels and improved outcomes for all children and young people; and those contained in priority two of the health and wellbeing strategy.

35. Vulnerable children and young people; their families and carers, are experiencing different and improved approaches to services delivery as we continue our implementation of the actions set out in our plan and in the context of the plan's status within the wider children's development plan. This includes looked after children and care leavers up to the age of 25.

Equality duty

36. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
37. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. We continue to make sure that as the action plan is implemented that we pay due regard to equality legislation.
38. The Safeguarding and Support improvement plan supports the council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular, the implementation of the plan continues to improve the outcomes of children and young people, by ensuring their diversity factors are assessed and assisting children and young people and their families to access services that meet their needs.

Resource implications

39. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implications of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.
40. The implementation of the improvement plans required additional resources, these were considered as part of the council's budget setting process; including what could be done in terms of prevention and edge of care and an amount of £1.6m was agreed for this area of work.

Legal implications

41. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendations in the report.

Risk management

42. The risks associated with the failure to implement the improvement plan are:

- a. The council does not deliver sustained improvement. Too many children and young people receive a poor service, there is drift and delay, children, and young people receive high threshold services that are reactive. There is not sufficient capacity for good social work to flourish and there are not a range of effective preventative and edge of care services to support children and young people safely in families. The council then runs the risk of being judged as inadequate by Ofsted under the ILAC's framework.
 - b. Reputational. The council does not make progress quickly enough and diversely affects the recruitment and retention of social work staff. This can have a knock on effect of increasing caseloads, which in turn has the potential to negatively impact on performance and quality of services for children and families. Consequently, the council would have to invest significant resources to then rectify the situation
43. The risks to successful delivery of the plan are:
- a. Insufficient resource is identified in the 2019/20 budget to implement the action plan in full. If this occurs there is a risk that the council will not deliver sustained improvement.
 - b. Change in culture and practice does not take place quickly or robustly enough and is not sustained. Accurate performance management information that is used at least weekly to manage and improve service delivery is a critical part of culture change, alongside capacity, training and development, audit work and changing practice as a result.

Consultees

- 44. The safeguarding and family support services regularly engage our children about the performance and delivery of our services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard within the feedback on our children and families within Herefordshire young people have been actively involved in safeguarding briefings to all newly and re-elected councillors.
- 45. We are working towards implementing a system called Mind Of My Own that will enable young people and children to provide feedback on the services that they are receiving from children and families; the apps enable young people to have their voices heard and to participate in decisions about their lives. This is due to be relaunched again in the Autumn of 2019 following some reconfiguration by the supplier and will then provide us with rich qualitative data that will be used to enable us to continue our journey of improvement and influence our plans.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019/2020
- Appendix B – Ofsted Improvement Plan to end of 2018 / 2019
- Appendix C – Children and families self-evaluation (June 2019)
- Appendix D - Safeguarding and Family Support monthly scorecard (September 2019)

Background papers

None identified

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(updated to end of quarter 2, September 2019)

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Statutory Visits to children will be completed within timescales 121	Heads of Service Team Managers	Children are seen to be safe and well, their voices heard, and they can develop a trusting relationship with their social worker	Looked after child (LAC) visits will be completed to timescale. Target 95%	85%		↑
			Child in need (CIN) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%	73%		↑
			Child protection (CP) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%	85%		↑
Strategy discussions will take place within timescales	Heads of service Team managers	Risks to children and young people are assessed, and intervention agreed is effective in keeping them safe	Strategy discussions are held within timescale - target of 90%	98%		↓
Section 47 (S47) investigations will take place within timescales	Heads of Service Team Managers	Levels of risk will be identified in a timely manner, and children will receive the most appropriate intervention to safeguard them, according to their needs, swiftly.	S47 investigations will take place within timescales. Target 95%	75%		↓
Children and family assessments will be completed within 45 days	Team Managers	Children will be seen, their voices heard, and their level of need identified in a timely manner	Assessments will be completed within timescale. Target 95%	84%		↓
Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) and Review Child Protection	Team Managers IRO Service	Risks to children will be assessed, and services required to protect them will be identified and	ICPC's and RCPC's will take place within timescales Target 90%	ICPC: 79% RCPC: 100%		↑ ↔

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Aim						
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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Conferences (RCPC's) will take place within timescales	Business Support	planned, so risk is reduced and children are safeguarded.				
LAC Reviews will take place within timescales	Team Managers IRO Service	Children will not be subject to drift and delay	LAC reviews will take place within target timescales 90%	Total LAC reviews % in timescale 84%.		↑
All contacts received into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be assessed within 1 day of receipt into MASH. We will strengthen MASH by adding an additional social worker to the establishment.	MASH TM and Head of Service	Risk will be identified and no child will be left at risk of significant harm.	Target of 95% of contacts dealt within 1 day of receipt into MASH will be met.	1 day: 89% 24hr: 46%		↑
We will ensure children receive early help swiftly where this is the appropriate service, by establishing an early help hub in MASH.	Head of Service Early help. Assistant Director Education	Issues will be addressed at the earliest opportunity with the lowest level of intervention where appropriate and safe to do so, to prevent escalation of issues for children. Children will wait no more than 4 weeks to receive a service.	Increase in children receiving early help intervention. Reduction in % contacts converting to referral. Decrease in re-referrals	Early Help: Sep 18: 729 Apr 19: 1122 Sep 19: 1230 Contacts to Referral (year to date %): 2018/2019: 17.4% Q2 2019: 24%		↑

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Aim						
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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
123				<p>There has been a decrease in re-referrals. End Q1: 23% End Q2: 19%</p> <p>There has been a waiting list for early help with some children waiting for more than 4 weeks for a service. This has been addressed during quarter 2, and at end of Q2 waiting list is 12 children with a maximum waiting time of 4 weeks</p>		
We will “shift” CIN work to the assessment service and to achieve this will establish a third team in the assessment service, one Team Manager, a Senior practitioner and four social workers	Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Family Support	Children will receive services, appropriate to their level of need without delay, and without a change in social worker. We will intervene swiftly at CIN level preventing unnecessary escalation to CP	CP numbers will decrease and stabilise. CIN interventions will evidence sustainable change.	Consultation with Heads of Service and team managers completed. AD/HoS group agreement to change as described. Request for additional resource to achieve made and approval given by		

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
				cabinet in principle Oct 2019		
We will “shift” the family support service to work alongside the assessment service, to support families at the child in need level with strong intensive family support	Assistant Director Safeguarding and family support	Children and families will receive family support at the earliest opportunity, to address issues, and work with families to bring about sustainable change	CP numbers will decrease and stabilise. CIN interventions will evidence sustainable change. There will be a decrease in repeat CP plans. There will be a decrease in re-referrals	Consultation with Heads of Service and team managers completed. AD/HoS group agreement to change as described.		↔
We will enable CP Court workers to focus on CP cases, cases in pre proceedings and proceedings.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support. CP/Court Head of Service	Children who require intervention as they are at significant risk of harm will receive intervention that promotes their safety and wellbeing.	Decrease in repeat CP interventions with children Maintain CP numbers @ 140-150 (appropriate number for Hereford demographic compared to statistical neighbours)	CP numbers @ month end: Sep 18: 124 Mar 19: 111 Sep 19: 153 Second CPP (within 2 years) Mar 19: 18% Sep 19: 16% Second CPP (ever) Mar 19: 30% Sep: 33%		↓ ↑ ↓

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will progress cases through pre proceedings and ensure actions identified are carried out to timescale. We will appoint an additional case progression officer to track cases and ensure they are working to timescales	Heads of Service CP/Court and safeguarding and review.	Children will not experience drift and delay. Parents will be clear what needs to change and timescales for children for changes to be made.	Evidence timescales in pre proceedings are consistently met. Decision regarding children's futures at the conclusion of pre proceedings are taken at panel without delay.	There is some delay in progressing some pre proceedings work, this is an area that requires attention and changes to the process are to be implemented in January 2020.		↔
We will consider permanence planning at the earliest opportunity upon agreement to issue care proceedings.	Head of Service CP/Court. Case progression officer.	Children will not experience drift and delay. The most appropriate permanency option for each individual child will be considered at the earliest opportunity.	More children have appropriate permanence plans identified earlier in proceedings.	Initial permanency planning meetings established. Review permanency meetings also established to ensure permanence options considered and timescales met to inform planning. Full impact of this has yet to be evidenced. Review to be undertaken end March 2020.		↔
We will front load work to ensure when we do enter	Assistant Director safeguarding	Children will not be subject to extended care proceedings	Maintain high performance in care proceedings concluding in 26 weeks.	Local Family Justice Board data indicates high		↔

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
proceedings these can be concluded in a timely manner.	and family support. Heads of Service Team Managers			performance against 26 week timescale		
We will ensure cases are transferred without delay to the appropriate part of the service	Heads of Service Team Managers	Children will receive the right service from the right social work service at the right time	Weekly transfer meetings will be held. There will be no unallocated cases. Cases will not remain on CIN or CPO plans for extended periods of time.	Transfer meetings held on a weekly basis chaired by HoS. No unallocated cases.		↔
We will develop our intervention with children and young people at risk of exploitation and develop a multi-agency approach to address child exploitation and rebrand this as contextualised safeguarding.	AD Safeguarding and family support. HoS safeguarding and review	Children and young people at risk of Child exploitation are diverted or where necessary supported to reduce the risk of harm ensure the child has	Young people and children who are at risk of exploitation will have regular risk management meetings and safety plans. Police operations can take place if required on information gathered. Multi agency prevent and disrupt activity will be effective.	Risk management meetings are being completed. Reporting on activity in this area of the service to scrutiny committee, November/December 2019. Scrutiny committee findings will be incorporated into Q3 improvement plan update.		↑

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Risk assessments are completed within timescales where risk of exploitation has been identified	AD Safeguarding and Family Support. HoS safeguarding and review	Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited	90% of exploitation risk assessments completed within 5 working days	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		
Risk management meetings are held within prescribed timescales	AD safeguarding and family support. HoS safeguarding and review	Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.	95% of risk management meetings held at least every 4 weeks for young people who are known to be exploited or at significant risk of exploitation	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		
			90% of risk management meetings held no more than 12 weekly for young people at moderate risk of exploitation	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		
Safety plans are developed in a timely manner during and following risk management meetings	AD safeguarding family support. HoS safeguarding and review.		90% of safety plans provided and distributed within 5 working days of a risk management meeting	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		
Children who are reported missing and are found receive	AD safeguarding and family support. HoS		100% of young people not previously receiving a service have a return home interviews	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance		

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Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
an effective response and their views are heard	safeguarding and review.		within 1 working day of being found	against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		
			100% of children placed from another local authority or already receiving a service have return home interviews within 3 working days	Mosaic development will provide clear accurate data on performance against this in Quarter 3 2019/20.		

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Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Every staff member will receive regular supervision 129	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support Heads of Service Team managers	Children will receive a high quality service and are safeguarded through plans and support which are effective	90% supervisions undertaken every calendar month	September supervisions: 74% overall 69% operational 92% business support		↓
Recruitment of social workers, will mean caseloads will be at a manageable level to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support. Organisational Development Business partner.	Children and families will receive an improved service as social workers will have time and capacity to build relationships, reflect on issues and appropriate responses, with children and families.	Fortnightly caseload performance information will evidence all caseloads under 20.	% workers holding more than 20 cases. 16+ team: 0% Assessment Team 1: 43% Assessment Team 2: 60% Court Team 1: 60% Court Team 2: 60% Court Team 3: 80% CWD: 50% LAC Team 1: 50% LAC Team 2: 40%		↓
Learning from audit activity will be shared with teams in learning workshops to aid development in	Principal Social Worker. QA Manager Heads of Service	Learning will inform and develop social work practice, improving services and	All workshops will take place in the timescales set and attendance by children and	9 workshops identified as needing to take place. 3 have happened, 6 are planned.		↑

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Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
social work practice across the service.		interventions offered to children and families.	families' social workers will be at least 70%.			
Bi-monthly learning events will take place to aid learning and development across the workforce, and embed a learning culture which informs development of good practice.	Principal Social Worker	Children will benefit from having a stable workforce that is highly skilled	QA Manager report will evidence bi monthly learning events have taken place. 70% of staff will have attended.	Learning event held on 15 th August. Business Support are going to assist with this to start to establish numbers of attendees and this as a % of the workforce.		↔
Group Supervision will be held on a monthly basis, led by senior practitioners, to aid and enhance learning and development	Heads of Service	Children and families will benefit from improved service delivery through social worker reflection on practice.	HoS will report in their improvement plans that group supervisions have taken pace as required.	Group supervision has commenced across all services. PSW and QA manager will work on embedding this across all service areas.		↔
Feedback and learning from audit activity will evidence improvement in the quality of social work practice on a quarterly basis.	Principal Social Worker	Practice will improve for children and families in Herefordshire.	Audit activity will show an increase in the % of work graded good: End September target; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% good. 	Good 29%. RI 50% Inadequate 21%. Actions on inadequate cases, where it has direct impact on		↑

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Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
131			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0% inadequate End December target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% good • 0% inadequate End March target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% good. • 0% inadequate. 	a child have to be completed in 5 working days.		
We have put in place a range of measures to enhance salaries and benefits for social workers Commissioned an external recruitment agency to recruit to hard to fill posts Worked with the regional ADCS Future Social Scheme to bring in agency workers. Increased business support and family support to assist social workers and take tasks from them	Organisational Development Business Partner, Assistant director safeguarding and family support, Director Children and Families	Children benefit from having well qualified, committed social workers	Vacancies will be filled and over time Herefordshire will recruit permanent social workers who stay	There were 5 permanent vacancies in Assessment Teams, 4 filled by agency workers 11 permanent vacancies in the CP Court team; 7 filled by agency workers. Both advanced practitioner posts and two out of the three practice educator posts are not filled		
We will recruit newly qualified social workers to complete an	Principal Social Worker	Herefordshire will increase the number of qualified,	We will have a clear rolling programme of ASYE joining	3 ASYE starters in Q2		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 2, September 2019)

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Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Assessed and Supported year in employment (ASYE) social workers.		substantive social workers, reducing change in social worker for children	the organisation and ASYE completing their first year of practice.			
We will establish a clear social work career pathway to enable social workers to invest in a career in Herefordshire	Organisational Development Business Partner	Children will benefit from having well qualified, committed and experienced social workers.	We will retain workers in Herefordshire, and appoint to senior positions from within.	Career pathway proposal to be presented to AD/HoS business and practice meeting quarter 3 2019/20.		
Signs of safety will be implemented across the council so there is a consistent approach across all partners in working with children and families.	Principal Social Worker	A strengths based approach will be embedded across all agencies, relationship based social work practice will flourish, feedback will be positive, from families, partners and Ofsted.	Signs of safety is implemented, embedded and informs all practice across the directorate and partnership.	The Principal Social Worker has now started with the council to lead the work. A signs of safety consultant is working with the council. Budget has been identified and project plan and roll-out meetings in place.		↔
We will establish an apprenticeship scheme to train non-qualified workers to social worker level and will back fill posts for apprentices to enable them to maximise their study activities	Organisational Development Business Partner	Children will receive a service from a suitably qualified social worker. Children will be able to build relationships with their social worker, and will not experience unnecessary	The apprenticeship scheme will be operational, with all places filled.	Scheme to commence February 2020 and on track to fill all places.		

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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
		changes in the social worker allocated to work with them.				
We will increase our children's social work leadership and capacity to enable the council to have the capacity to improve.	Director children and families	Children will receive a high quality and timely service	We will be able to demonstrate appropriate workloads for staff and clear evidence of improvements in quality of practice being embedded in day to day work – evidenced by performance and quality measures improving and reported in this plan.	Business case developed for a range of leadership and quality posts as well as additional social workers for assessment team, tracking and put forward for 2020/21 budget.		

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Aim						
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will use performance information to interrogate practice and performance, to inform progress against improvement plan targets 134	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support Heads of Service Team managers Performance team	All managers across Childrens and families will know area for development, and can take swift action to rectify areas where minimum standards required are not being met.	Performance information will be green across the board and all KPIs will be consistently met.	Performance reports are available weekly, consistently collated and distributed, and used to inform evaluation of progress against service area improvement plans.		
Each HoS will oversee a service area improvement plan which will track improvement against KPIs. This will be updated on a monthly basis and be reported into AD/HoS Budget & Performance monthly meeting	Heads of Service	As performance improves, children and families will receive services of a consistently high quality.	The RAG rating in each plan will move from majority red to majority green.	Plans are updated every month, so the process of reviewing performance and reporting on performance against plans is embedded. Performance improving to majority green not being achieved.		
Each HoS will provide a SEF to report on overall service area activity on a quarterly basis	Heads of Service	Each service area will have an up to date and accurate assessment of its strengths, areas for improvement, and timescales to achieve improvement, so are	SEF will increasingly identify areas of good practice and strengths within service areas.	SEFs completed for end of quarter 2.		

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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
		continually driving forward to improve the quality of services.				
Each HoS will hold monthly service area performance meetings with team managers and senior practitioners so all managers are conversant with performance in their individual teams, service areas and across the organisation	Heads of Service	In identifying areas where performance needs attention, children and families in Herefordshire will be served by an organisation seeking to continually improve its service to children and families in Herefordshire.	Trends will show improvement. Areas identified as requiring improvement will receive appropriate attention and show improvement.	Performance information is now available on a weekly basis. Embedding the use of this to drive performance improvement requires embedding across all service areas.		
A Mosaic improvement group will meet on a monthly basis to develop and improve the efficiency and breadth of reporting across children & families	Business Support leads. Performance team.	Processes to identify case progression for each child will be improved, so cases that may be subject to drift and delay are quickly identified.	Performance against timescale targets will improve.	Mosaic improvement group meeting. Work plan for improvements to system being revised.		
Monthly audit activity will take place, the outcome of which will be reported into AD/HoS monthly business and practice meeting by PSW and QA manager	Principal social worker	As an organisation, we will identify good practice that can be rolled out across all services, so children and families in Hereford will	Audit activity will take place every month as planned. Outcome will be reported into AD/HoS business and practice meeting on a	Audit activity is taking place as planned, monthly reports are discussed at AD/HoS business and practice meeting. Impact of audit activity on practice		

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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
		benefit from improvement in social work practise and intervention.	regular basis. % of work graded good will increase. % work graded inadequate will decrease.	improvement has yet to be established.		
Quarterly deep dive audit will take place focussing on a specific practice area but in all deep dive audits timeliness quality and consistency of management grip will be measured	Principal social worker	Over time, a clear, detailed picture will be established as to the quality of practice, areas for improvement established and training required to support practice improvement will be developed, improving services to children and families across Herefordshire.	Training programme will be informed by outcomes of deep dive audit and practice in specific service areas will improve.	First deep dive audit took place in September 2019, concentrating on CIN work.		↔
Actions required following audits will be followed up by QA manager to ensure they are completed by a specified date	QA manager	Cases where actions are identified to benefit children and families will be completed in a timely manner, improving the safety and wellbeing of children receiving social care intervention.	QA manager will report into AD/HoS meeting that there are no actions outstanding from timescale agreed.	This process has commenced, and whilst at present, some actions are not completed in timescales, the numbers in this category are decreasing.		↑

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We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will recruit to the Principal Social Worker post, regraded at Head of Service level, to strengthen the senior management team	Assistant director safeguarding and family support	Herefordshire will have a leader on practice development, focusing on QA activity and workforce development to improve services to children and families across Herefordshire.	Audit activity will show improvement in practice. Social workers will report satisfaction with training and development opportunities in Herefordshire.	PSW took up post September 2019.		
137						
We will recruit an additional Quality Assurance (QA) manager to provide greater opportunity for quality assurance, feedback and learning	Director Children's Services	Children and families will benefit from improvement in intervention and quality of social work practice identified in QA activity.	Additional QA manager will be in post.	Included in budget setting 2020/21.		

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Looked after children (LAC) reviews are held and records	HoS Safeguarding and Review	Children will not experience drift and delay. Plans will be	95% of 1st LAC reviews held within timescale	85%		

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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
distributed within statutory timescales 138		progressed due to reviews taking place within timescales.				
			95% of 2nd and subsequent LAC reviews held within timescale	92%		↑
			90% of LAC review minutes written and distributed within 20 working days	53%		↓
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) recommendations from LAC reviews are agreed and progressed within timescales	HoS safeguarding and review	Children's plans will be progressed so they will not experience drift and delay and the best options for their future will be progressed swiftly.	90% of LAC review recommendations are completed and sent to relevant team manager within 5 working days of the review	83%		↑
			90% of LAC review recommendations are responded to by the relevant team manager within 5 working days of having received them	51%		↓
IRO is effective in ensuring care plans are appropriate to meet needs and do not drift	HoS Safeguarding and review	Children's plans do not drift and their progress is overseen by their IRO.	90% of cases have at least 2 IRO oversights recorded within a 12 month period	80%		↓

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We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
139	HoS safeguarding and review	Where issues are identified that are preventing plans for children progressing, these are acted upon swiftly by using the escalation process, evidencing IRO grip on the progression of children's care plans.	100% of formal disputes resolved within 20 working days	4 escalations raised in Q2. None were resolved within timescales; but have now been resolved.		↓
Children will be encouraged to participate in their LAC reviews in a meaningful way	HoS safeguarding and review	Children will be able to voice their views and inform their care plans.	90% of children over the age of 4 participate in their LAC review in some form	88%		↓
Children will have the opportunity to consult with their IRO before their LAC review and will be provided with information about their rights and entitlements	Safeguarding and Review Head of Service	The wishes and feelings of children will be heard, validated, and will be part of establishing plans for children.	85% of children have a consultation with their IRO as part of each LAC review	95%		↑
Life story work and later life letters will be completed for every child moving to adoption in a timely manner.	LAC head of Service	Children will be able to understand their own family and care history	The backlog of life story work and later life letters will reduce every month and be eliminated	There is a backlog of 37 life story books. The quality of life story work has improved.		↑
Children who don't need to be looked after will be supported to	LAC head of Service	Children who can be safely cared for outside of the LAC system	Number of looked after children leaving care will	Numbers of LAC moving to appropriate		↔

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Aim						
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Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
return to their parents care or to be cared for outside of the looked after system via adoption or Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). 140		can grow up within a family without state intervention.	increase to that equivalent to or above statistical neighbours. Numbers of looked after children will decrease.	arrangements have not been achieved to the level expected. The Assistant Director and Director have met with the head of service and managers to review plans and progress.		
We are investing in property for our care leavers and support services in the accommodation. We are submitting a further business case for an expansion of local supported accommodation in Herefordshire	LAC head of Service	Care leavers who require a level of support will be able to obtain this in Hereford, maintaining their links with friends, kin and community in surroundings they are familiar with.	Funding for placements will decrease. Young people will remain in Hereford.	Planning underway and estimated time for property to be ready for occupancy is May 2020.		↔
We will establish clear transition pathways for vulnerable young people so they receive the services they require to assist them in adulthood.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support	Young adults, vulnerable to risk will receive services to assist them transition into adulthood.	There will be an increase in young people who receive services when entering into adulthood.	Limited progress in this area, reporting on vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation moving into adulthood to be reported on in Q3.		↔

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Aim						
We will aim to strengthen families and enable children to live within their family network through early help and edge of care offers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will invest resources into both early help and family support resources to ensure children receive services at the earliest possible opportunity. 141	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	We will establish a culture of maintaining children within their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.	LAC numbers will decrease. CP numbers will decrease Re referrals will decrease. Early help interventions will increase.	There has been a decrease in re-referrals. End Q1: 23% End Q2: 19% Early help interventions have risen. LAC numbers have not decreased. CP numbers have not decreased.		   
OWe will reconfigure where the social care family support system operates to ensure it can work with families at the earliest opportunity	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	Children and families will receive services aimed to enable them to become more resilient and maintain sustainable change at an earlier opportunity, reducing the need for statutory social care intervention	We will have fewer children on CP plans, caseloads in CP/Court will reduce, and fewer children will be re-referred to children's social care.	Agreement from children and families AD/HoS group to reconfigure. Review of family support service planned to commence and conclude end of November 2019 to inform this process.		
We will developed an edge of care service, to enable children to reunify to and/or remain with their families	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	Children will be enabled to remain within their family network, or return to their family network where safe to do so, maintain their links with kin and community.	We will have a fully functioning edge of care service. Less children will enter the looked after system, more children will leave the looked after system,	Oct 2019 Cabinet has approved funding to be used in 2019/20 to start the service. Good support from internal stakeholders and council		

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Aim						
We will aim to strengthen families and enable children to live within their family network through early help and edge of care offers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
			both where safe and appropriate for the child.			

Direction of travel key:-



Increase in improvement of direction of travel



Remained same as previous period



Decrease in improvement of direction of travel

The improvement plan sets out the seven key areas for improvement as identified by Ofsted, further areas for improvement are then grouped according to the areas of the Safeguarding and Early Help Development Plan. This plan will be developed further with local authorities identified by the DfE to aid Herefordshire's improvement.

Actions contributing to the delivery of the plan will be reviewed weekly, fortnightly and monthly within the service. Updates will be provided to management board and to Cabinet as part of performance and budget reporting. Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee will regularly review progress against the plan.

RAGB Status	Indicator / Definition	Actions
Red	"Action" is behind schedule. Performance measure not yet achieved	Director / Assistant Director will review the "Action" to identify the root causes of the red status. Action Plan owners will produce plans to prevent further deterioration and ensure action is back on track – plans will be approved by Assistant Director.
Amber	"Action" has experienced some issues. Delays forecasted. Performance measure unlikely to be achieved on time	Director / Assistant Director will maintain a watching brief over amber "Action/s". Action Plan owners will produce plans to ensure action is back on track – plans will be approved by Assistant Director.
Green	"Action" is on track. Completion date and performance measure is expected to be achieved.	Director / Assistant Director need assurance the "Action" is truly green.
Blue	"Action" completion date and performance measure achieved. "Action" complete/closed.	

Ofsted Inspection of children's social care services 04/06/18 - 22/06/18 - What needs to improve

Ofsted No. 1 Senior leadership urgency in implementing a robust and timely action plan to deliver improvements and to address deficits in social work practice

RP 51	A leadership team with constrained capacity, lack of stability and, in some areas, poor performance.						
RP 61	Leaders and managers are aware of deficits in practice and service provision, but currently there is a lack of timely action planning to remedy this.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
1.1	Establish specific Service Area Action Plans to address continual areas for improvement, these are to be refreshed at least every 3 months to ensure they drive improvement. These feed into the overall Ofsted Improvement Plan.	31/01/19	Assistant director safeguarding and family support	Action plans agreed and actions taking place	Improvements in core quality of practice is evident through performance and audit reporting	Action plans updated in January for the period January 2019 - March 2019. Actions are being delivered. Monitoring process is established.	B
1.3	Children and Families Scrutiny Committee to review updated action plan and make recommendations to the executive.	04/03/19	Director for children and families	Updated Ofsted Improvement Plan agreed	Scrutiny have reviewed the action plan and made their recommendations to the executive.	Updated Ofsted Improvement Plan to go to Children and Families Scrutiny Committee 04/03/2019	B
1.4	Formally share updated Improvement Plan with Ofsted.	01/03/19	Director for children and families	N/A	N/A	Completed - to be shared with Ofsted Regional Director and colleagues at Annual Conversation and to continue to be refreshed every 3 months focussing on quality and embedding change.	B

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
1.6	Continue to monitor Ofsted Improvement Plan and Service Area Action Plans using project management approach, monthly review meetings and reports. Quarterly updates to cabinet and children and families scrutiny.	from 10/09/2018	Assistant director safeguarding and family support	N/A	Change is evidenced	Process in place and working effectively to check on the progress of actions within the service specific action plans	B
1.7	Progress update sent to Department for Education (DfE) for 6 monthly review	01/04/19	Director for children and families	N/A	N/A	Updated Ofsted Improvement plan January to March to be submitted to DfE	B

Ofsted No. 2	The sufficiency of social workers and managers with capacity to cope with the need for services and the volume of social worker caseloads
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RP10	Social workers across this service have high caseloads. In addition, and because of delays in transferring to other teams, they are also holding a mixed caseload. This means that social workers are struggling with competing demands and are prioritising their work with child protection and court cases taking precedence. ... Evidence showed that there is effective child-centred practice that improves children's circumstances, but this is not consistent for all children.
RP 16	Some children benefit from good direct work by social workers they know and trust, but this is not a consistent feature of social work practice. Children in this service experience too many changes of managers and social workers.
RP 36	Despite this good work, the quality and progress of care planning is compromised for some children because of too many changes in social worker. This also means that it is difficult for children to build trusting relationships with their social workers.
RP 52	Caseloads are too large, ineffective quality assurance and performance management and continuing difficulties in recruiting good quality social work staff and managers.
RP 54	Despite this good work, the quality and progress of care planning is compromised for some children because of too many changes in social worker. This also means that it is difficult for children to build trusting relationships with their social workers.
RP 55	Social workers from various teams are prevented from providing the quality of service they know is required because of excessive caseloads and ineffective deployment of staff. This is further hampered by a lack of robust, clear and timely management oversight and case direction. Senior leaders acknowledge this and now have the early stages of an improvement strategy in place. However, it is too early to see any impact.

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No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
2.2	Implement package of measures to support retention of experienced staff	01/08/18 - phase 1 (Market forces supplement, relocation, recommend a friend). 28/12/18 - phase 2 (learning accounts, retention payments). 29/03/19 - phase 3 (corporate employee benefits)	Organisational development business partner	Vacancies levels in Child Protection/Court Team	Child Protection/Court Team is fully staffed and internal movement other than for promotion is reduced to zero	Market forces supplement implemented across social worker roles. Increased relocation payment in place. Drop in sessions held to get staff views on next steps. Proposals considered by mini-board. Individual learning accounts for social workers launched week commencing 22/10/2018.	B
2.3	Develop and implement revised career pathways to support professional and personal development	31/03/19	Organisational development business partner	Number of appointments to social worker from student placements, Step Up and apprenticeships.	We have developed and implemented clear career pathways that staff tell us they understand - via health check and employee opinion survey.	Consultation on career pathway completed and implementation planning underway; report has been completed and agreed	B
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status

2.5	Recruit a team of 10 agency social workers into the Child Protection/Court Team to provide six months cover.	22/10/19	Organisational development business partner	Social workers recruited and team in place no later than 22/10/18	Timely and high quality services are delivered to children and families (frequent change of social worker and drift/delay is avoided). Social work caseloads are reduced and case transfers across the service are enabled.	As at 15th January 2019 all positions in Assessment are filled with either permanent or agency staff. 3 vacancies in CP/CT following resignations and termination of agency worker. Orders submitted for replacements. Contracts extended for all regional people to October 2019.	B
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Ofsted No. 3	Senior manager's interaction with social workers to enable staff to feel listened to
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RP 57	Staff in some teams feel a strong disconnect from their senior managers, which is inhibiting improvement. If improvements are to be made securely, this needs immediate attention.
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No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
3.2	Rolling programme of regular staff briefings regarding Children and Families Development Plan and underpinning philosophy regarding how to deliver services to children/families.	from 24/09/2018	Director for children and families/Assistant director safeguarding and family support	Briefings complete and briefing materials distributed to all staff.		Programme of meetings in place and staff briefings taking place on a regular basis	B
3.5	Staff views requested and received on how to improve methods of communication/ engagement.	31/03/19	Director for children and families/Heads of service	Views collated/established/embedded.		Review of effectiveness to be completed. Any further suggestions from the review to be implemented across the directorate.	B
3.6	Implement Cascade Model of information sharing from Assistant director/ Head of service meetings to Head of service /Team manager meetings through to team meetings to embed information flow through the organisation.	31/03/19	Assistant director safeguarding and family support	Model implemented/embedded.	Staff are having information shared with them routinely	Compliance audited in October 2018. Findings to be discussed at AD / HOS meeting in January 2019; with a further audit to be undertaken in March 2019 and report to AD/ HOS meeting in April	B

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Ofsted No. 4	The pace of progressing child protection and child in need plans and the quality of practice with children in need
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RP11	The quality of services and practice for children in need is poor in many cases. Responses to their needs are too slow and lack the focus required to make meaningful changes to their situations. Current arrangements do not provide effective oversight, and while senior managers have developed an action plan to improve this situation, they do not ensure that all children in need are receiving the services they need in a timely way or that their needs are prevented from escalating.
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RP 13	The quality of child protection plans is too variable and is poor in some cases. ... Weaker plans lack sufficient details for families to see clearly what services are going to be offered, who will provide them, their responsibilities and the timescale for them to take particular actions. This makes it difficult for families to understand what needs to change and by when.
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RP 14	Children in need and children subject to child protection plans do not always receive timely visits. Over half of children who are the subject of a child protection plan are not visited the locally defined minimum amount or visited enough times to meet their needs in line with their plans. Children are not always seen alone when social workers visit. This means that children are not always able to develop meaningful and trusting relationships with their social workers. Further social workers do not always have a sufficiently full understanding of children's current circumstances to mitigate risk and to effectively progress the child's plan.
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RP 19	Identification of risk is not routinely followed up by well-coordinated and focused intervention, with the result that there are delays in progress for children. Often, there is too much focus on single issues, rather than understanding how risks relate to each other and then formulating an overarching plan to address this. The impact on children who are living in such circumstances is not well understood by senior managers, and assertive and timely action is not always well coordinated to improve their circumstances.
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RP 56	Too many children in need of help and protection and children in care are receiving a poor service. Practice is not consistently child focused. Planning for children is not always sufficiently robust or purposeful and this is compounded by management oversight that is not effective in addressing this. As a result, some children experience unnecessary drift and delay and their circumstances do not improve in a timely way.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
4.4	A comprehensive action plan will be implemented to raise the standard and quality of child protection plans	30/11/18	Head of service safeguarding and review	All Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO's) and Team managers understand and accept principles and practice of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (SMART) child protection plans	All children who require a child protection plan will have a robust child centred child protection plan	Action plan in place, to date achievements made against timescales including Head of service reviewing quality of child protection plans in every 1:1 on monthly basis.	G
4.5	Targets will be set to measure improvement in timeliness of visits to children in need and children with child protection plans. The performance information will be reviewed on a weekly basis by Team managers, Heads of service and Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	10/09/18	Assistant director safeguarding and family support / Head of service	Timescales set end of Sept 65%; end Oct 75%; end Nov 85%	Children will receive the service they require and deserve and statutory timescale visits are completed	Visits are an issue that has seen some improvements in some teams but is yet to be consistent across all areas. Work continues to ensure that there is capacity to undertake the visits and tools are being provided to enable social workers to record their visits in an effective efficient manner.	A

Ofsted No. 5	The regularity and quality of social worker supervision
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RP 17	Social workers do not receive regular supervision, and when it does take place, it does not provide the necessary support and direction to ensure that all children's cases progress without delay.						
RP 54	Leaders and managers have not been effective in overseeing and ensuring that social work practice flourishes. Their lack of grip and direction has resulted in a service where some decision-making is very poor, some staff do not receive supervision and workforce capacity is not at the level required to provide a good-quality service for children and families.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
5.2	Establish fortnightly reporting on Supervision figures/numbers.	from 01/09/2018	Performance service manager	Figures available		Frequency of supervision data is now being received at the end of December 2018 casework supervision 61% and worker supervision 75% being completed	B
5.3	Undertake an audit of the quality of Supervision provided to Social workers by Team managers	31/03/19	Heads of service	Audit completed	When the quality of supervision is consistently good.	Observation of supervision has begun in MASH / Assessment and this is now to be embedded across safeguarding and family support to use in all teams	G

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Ofsted No. 6	The quality and purposefulness of management oversight and decision making and the existing quality assurance and performance management system						
RP 6	The current arrangements within the MASH are not fully collaborative. Domestic abuse notifications are not triaged prior to them arriving in the MASH, which places additional burden upon the MASH manager. Police notifications classed as medium or standard risk are reviewed by police development officers appropriately and on a daily basis. However, there is no social care oversight of these cases, and, currently, there are no agreed timescales for ensuring that all notifications are reviewed. The consequences of this is that any risks to children might not be identified in a timely way, or they might be missed entirely.						
RP 17	Management oversight of frontline practice is not consistently effective. It is not evident in all cases and does not provide the robust challenge and direction needed to urgently progress plans and avoid drift and delay. Social workers do not receive regular supervision, and when it does take place, it does not provide the necessary support and direction to ensure that all children's cases progress without delay.						
RP 42	Educational outcomes for children in care are variable across the local authority. The attainment of key stage 4 children in care has been in line with, or above, national levels for the last two years. The attainment of children in care in key stages 1 and 2 has been variable for the last two years. The local authority is aware of this variability and is committed to raising standards further. The electronic system that has been introduced to record children's outcomes does not provide the virtual school with sufficiently detailed information about the children's attainment and progress. As a result, it is not yet possible to fully track outcomes and respond accordingly to any identified issues or trends.						
RP 43	The virtual school does not have sufficiently detailed information about the attainment of children in care, and schools report that children in care achieve mixed levels of progress. Targets within personal education plans are not specific or measurable enough to allow professionals to make an accurate judgement about the progress of children in care. This is particularly the case for looked after children and care leavers in secondary and 16-19 provision. Personal education plans do include the views and feelings of children in care.						
RP 54	Leaders and managers have not been effective in overseeing and ensuring that social work practice flourishes. Their lack of grip and direction has resulted in a service where some decision-making is very poor, some staff do not receive supervision and workforce capacity is not at the level required to provide a good-quality service for children and families.						
RP 55	Social workers from various teams are prevented from providing the quality of service they know is required because of excessive caseloads and ineffective deployment of staff. This is further hampered by a lack of robust, clear and timely management oversight and case direction. Senior leaders acknowledge this and now have the early stages of an improvement strategy in place. However, it is too early to see any impact.						
RP 59	Senior managers acknowledge that their current performance and management information data is underdeveloped and does not provide sufficient accurate detail to support their understanding of what is happening in their service. This requires immediate and robust attention.						
RP 60	Quality assurance processes are undertaken routinely, but they are rendered ineffective because of a lack of follow-through on issues of concern. This is a missed opportunity to improve the quality of social-work practice and a failure of managers.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
6.1	Improve the quality and detail of performance information to enable managers to have a grip on how their teams are performing and take appropriate action where required	31/03/19	Performance team lead	Accurate performance information is available and practice standards are improved	Managers are using performance information as business as usual and performance measures are improved	Data book has launched; reports on weekly visits and supervision in place. Local authority is working with Staffordshire and Doncaster to further improve the information provided	B
6.5	Ensure schools are set appropriate and rigorous attainment targets for looked after children; including English and Maths	28/09/18	Head of learning and achievement	Appropriate targets set.	Educational outcomes for children in care will be in line with national or above for looked after children at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), phonics, Key Stage 1 (KS1), KS2, KS4 and KS5 for all external performance measures in 2019 and beyond;	Monthly drop sessions are being offered by the Virtual School to all schools to troubleshoot issues effecting ePEPs being rated below standard. The first session is 26th February. The vast majority now include academic targets and procedures and training is in place for those that don't. Sometimes the academic targets need to be more specific/rigorous. This is still a work in progress	B
6.13	Report on ePEP targets	31/03/19	Head of learning and achievement	Report produced and discussed.	Targets reached and attainment improved.	All ePEP meeting minutes and ePEPs demonstrate that staff from the virtual school review and challenge progress towards these targets.	B
6.14	Quality assure ePEPs and provide feedback.	31/03/19	Head of learning and achievement	ePEPs audited and feedback provided.	Improved standard of ePEP.		B

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No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
6.15	Heads of service required to audit 2 cases a month and provide feedback and learning to close the learning loop with individual social workers.	From September 2018	Heads of service	2 cases audited per month. 100% compliance required for all adults completed.	Evidence of cases being audited per month and feedback being provided to individual social workers	New QA approach providing monthly QA activity	B
6.17	Quality assurance responsibilities of team managers made explicit with a quality assurance forward plan, requiring them to audit 2 cases per month.	From October 2018	Head of service safeguarding and review / Assistant director safeguarding and family support	Quality assurance forward plan in place. 100% completion rate required.	Evidence of cases being audited per month	Performance: audits returned Sept – Dec 2018 74%. A small number of team managers continue not to return audits. Audit actions completed Sept 81%, Oct 83%, Nov 55%, overall Sept-Nov 18 70% completed. Jan 2019 targets have been set and agreed (AD/HOS) for improvement.	B
6.19	Quarterly workshops held to improve quality and consistency to audit approach across all Team managers and Heads of service.	From 11/10/2018	Assistant director/ safeguarding and family support	Workshops being held on a regular basis	Workshops have taken place and the quality and consistency of practice improves across the children and families directorate	First workshops held through October; and the workshop timing has evolved and is now being held on a bi-monthly basis	B
6.20	Assistant director to lead quarterly learning event with relevant service area to close the learning loop from the Quality Assurance Team Manager audit activity in service area.	from 10/10/2018	Assistant director/ safeguarding and family support	Learning events are in place	We are able to evidence that the learning loop is being closed and that the learning is embedded	Learning events taking place on a quarterly basis focussing on specific areas of social work	B
6.21	Establish a clear action plan to improve frequency and quality of quality assurance activity and establish a mechanism to evidence closure of the learning loop	From July 2018	Head of service safeguarding and review	Action plan in place with appropriate mechanism to close the loop	The frequency and quality of the audits improve and there is an appropriate mechanism in place to ensure closure of the learning loop	Quality assurance manager completed 3 month period of performance improvement activity in the assessment service, including auditing cases, providing feedback, following up on actions, provided workshops and best practice checklist.	B

DP No.3	Delivering our Permanency Plan for looked after children						
RP 20	Work with families is not always consistently child-centred. Following an initial public law outline (PLO) meeting, in some cases the significance of what happens to a child is lost as the focus shifts on to the adults. Some letters before proceedings are too long and do not assist parents to understand what they need to prioritise and how they are going to be supported to change. Some children experience drift and delay at this stage, and review PLO meetings are not taking place in a timely way.						
RP 27	The arrangements for children in private foster care are not well managed. Children do not receive a timely and responsive assessment of their needs or of their carers' abilities to meet their needs. Not all required checks are carried out and not all children have been seen in a timely way.						
RP 30	The planning that follows is not always sufficiently robust or purposeful, and, as a result, several children have remained subject to these arrangements for too long. This has resulted in prolonged drift in progressing their care						
RP 32	Children's care plans are of variable quality. Some are specific and clear, while others are overly long. In these plans, outcomes are not measurable and actions and timescales are recorded as 'ongoing'. In some cases, this has contributed to drift and delay for children						
RP 37	IRO visits to children are not always recorded on their case files, and so the IRO footprint is not consistently evident. IRO scrutiny and challenge to progressing plans and addressing drift is not always sufficiently robust.						
RP 38	Case records do not demonstrate that matching takes place at the point of children coming into care, and for some children permanence is not achieved within their timescales.						
RP 39	The authority's arrangements for delegating authority to carers is not sufficiently clear and has not been for some time, despite the issue being raised by young people previously. This is an important issue for young people and means that some foster carers are still unable to make appropriate day-to-day decisions on their behalf.						
RP 40	The local authority is struggling to provide a sufficient number of foster families, and in particular those that meet the needs of sibling groups and teenagers.						
RP 47	Not all young people have access to their health information. Inspectors identified this as an important issue for young people and the local community has agreed to take this forward as an area for immediate improvement.						
RP 50	Care leavers are aware of the advocacy service, although they feel that their voices are not always heard or taken account of. Access to mental health services for care leavers is difficult, and to date there is no strategy to improve this situation.						
RP 58	Sufficiency planning lacks effective strategic direction and future needs are not articulated clearly. This is compounded by the current commissioning strategy not being underpinned by a comprehensive assessment of future needs.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
149 DP 3.10	Draft placement Sufficiency strategy informed by LAC population estimates	28/02/18	Childrens Joint Commissioning Manager	Draft strategy approved through council governance	There are clear expectations on the number and type of bed nights required to meet expected demand, and action plans in place to secure sufficient provision.	14/11/18 - Strategy reviewed. Presented at SMT on 14/01/19 and will go to Cabinet In Feb 19.	B
DP 3.11	In-house fostering recruitment targets and action plan in place as part of Sufficiency Strategy.	28/02/18	Childrens Joint Commissioning Manager	Recruitment targets and action plan approved by DLT	Carer recruitment and retention rates increase to meet demand. Recruitment targets and performance is reported through CWB scorecard.		B

DP 4 (i) Application and understanding of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) thresholds							
RP 2	A significant number of contacts are signposted away from children's social care, which means that too many children are being referred who do not need this level of support. A number of children who would benefit from early help services experience delay because thresholds are not appropriately applied or understood. This is an area that needs to be strengthened so that children and families who might benefit from early help are quickly identified and do not experience any delays in receiving the help they need.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
DP 4(i).7	Develop Early Help Strategy 2018 - 2023 and delivery with partners and have in place from April 2019	01/04/19	Early Help Manager	Strategy in place and owned across Herefordshire services	The Early Help offer is embedded and understood by all partners.	Initial proposals set out. Contact made with other local authority via the DfE to bring in learning from outside Herefordshire and Early Help Plan is evolving and will be taken through the governance process	B
DP4 (ii) Improving quality and consistency of practice							
RP 5	Poor recording in some cases means there is not always evidence in children's records that they have been seen or the extent of the direct work that has been undertaken with children.						
RP 9	In poorer assessments, and particularly where neglect is a long standing issue, social workers do not routinely consider historic concerns and their analysis can be over optimistic. Children are not routinely spoken to alone by social workers as part of their own assessments, and so subsequent plans are not informed by a child's view of their lived experience. In some cases, assessments are overly focused on the needs of adults.						
RP 12	The local authority has invested in graded care profile training to support social workers in dealing with cases of neglect. Despite staff speaking positively about this, no evidence of this training was seen being used with individual children.						
RP 24	The recordings of discussions with children lack analysis, with the result that it is not always clear how the information gathered informs safety planning for children.						
RP 29	Decisions for children to become looked after are not always based on up-to-date assessments. Assessments are not routinely updated to reflect changes in a child's circumstances and needs. Historical concerns are not always fully considered, and this means that some children whose circumstances had not changed should have come into care sooner.						
No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance Measure	We will know it's working when	Progress	RAGB Status
DP 4(ii).1	All operational Heads of Service will establish, implement and progress improvement action plans to drive the quality and consistency of practice in their service areas.	From 21/09/2018	Heads of service	Actions are signed off by Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support	Monthly review of action plans evidences progress against targets	Action plans updated in January for the period January 2019 - March 2019. Actions are being delivered. Monitoring process is established.	B
DP 4(ii).2	Decision to be made on the most appropriate social work model to be implemented across Herefordshire Children and Families Directorate and appropriate implementation plan established	31/08/18	Principal Social Worker/Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support	Social Work Practice Model implemented and training undertaken.	We can evidence consistency and quality of practice.	Social work model identified. Director establishing support from local authority that has experience of implementing Signs of Safety via DfE improvement lead and is being taken through the internal governance process.	B
DP 4(ii).4	Design/develop and implement 2 year Quality assurance and learning framework (QALF).	31/03/19	Head of Service Safeguarding and Review	Implementation plan agreed and signed off by 31/03/2019.	The authority will have a strong learning culture underpinned by focused, collaborative, quality assurance work. This will provide meaningful learning to enable the organisation to continuously improve.	Revised audit approach including training now in place	B

**Children and Families Directorate
Children's Safeguarding Self-Evaluation****Introduction**

1. Herefordshire is a rural, unitary authority with a population dispersed between the city, five market towns and a large number of villages. Children form 20% of the population, numbering 36,000. As at 30 June 2019, 1288 children and young people were benefitting from an early help assessment, 208 were supported by a child in need plan, 109 subject to child protection plans and 334 were looked after. 886 children have statements of special educational needs (SEN) or education, health and care (EHC) plans maintained by Herefordshire Council.
2. There are 78 primary schools, 16 secondary schools, 4 special schools and one PRU with 33 academies including 2 free schools. There are 9 children's centres, 86 Ofsted registered childminders and 123 early years settings.
3. Herefordshire Council was judged as requires improvement overall in June 2018 for its Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). Within this the sub judgements were inadequate for leadership and management; requiring improvement for the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection and for the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. The council were judged as requires improvement by Ofsted in 2014 for its single inspection of local authority children's services and review of the HSCB. This followed a judgement of inadequate in 2012 for its arrangements for protection of children. Herefordshire had a positive Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection in 2016.
4. The director for children and families was appointed in November 2017. The local elections in May 2019 means that we have recently has a change in lead member for children and families. The assistant director for safeguarding and family support started on 4 June 2018.
5. Children's Social Care is predominantly part of the Safeguarding and Family Support Division. It includes a MASH, two assessment teams that also hold S17 cases, three child protection and court teams, 2 looked after children teams, one 16+ team, 1 safeguarding and review team, and 2 fostering teams. The adoption service moves into a regional adoption agency in 1st July 2019. 2 teams of family support workers support children known to these services; one of these teams works alongside the court /CP service, with the other team providing early help and family support team working with children who do not meet a level of need requiring social care intervention. A central business support team and social work academy supports the whole service. The children with a disability team is part of the 0-25 SEND service which is managed by the Head of Additional Needs within the Education, Development and Skills Division.
6. Herefordshire's early help approach and offer is overseen by an early help manager within Education, Development and Skills. This includes the council's own direct work early help team. Education, Development and Skills is also responsible for fulfilling local authority duties regarding promoting safeguarding and the welfare of all children

in early years settings, schools and colleges, school improvement including safeguarding, joint commissioning, early years sufficiency, children centre services and targeted early help services. Additional resources has been given to Early Help to manage and co-ordinate the early help assessments and increase the number of family support workers to work with vulnerable families to meet identified needs.

7. The council has established its long-term strategy to secure good child protection services within an environment of reducing resources. The priorities for changes are to build independence and self-support within families and communities; to target support services proactively in areas of need; and to change the models of delivery.
8. Our Children and Young People’s Plan 2019 – 2024 has four priority areas: to keep children and young people safe from harm, to be healthy, to be amazing and to feel part of the community. The new plan was approved by full council in July 2019.

Data up to end of June 2019	
Early Help	1288 Early help assessments
Contact and referrals	1553 contacts – YTD June 2019 381 referrals 381 88.1% managed in timescale 88.1% 23% re-referrals 53% of contacts where no further action taken
Assessments	280 single assessments completed 91 % within timescale
Child in need	208 child in need plans
Child protection	135 s47 investigations initiated 46 Initial Child Protections Conferences convened. 109 children subject to Child Protection Plans 18 on CPP for second time 18 1 on CPP for more than two years
Looked after children	334 LAC 22 LAC had three or more placements. 97 u16 in same placement for more than 2.5 years 71% in internal foster placement 71%
Visits (in timescale)	CP 84% LAC 82% CIN 72%
Supervision	Case Supervision CP 67% LAC 55% CIN 66%

Summary

Areas of strength

- strong staff knowledge of children and their families
- committed and dedicated staff who feel supported by their managers

- ability to follow through on action plans eg decrease in children on CP plans, response to children accommodated under Section 20.
- gaps in attainment closing for LAC in the virtual school; KS4 attainment in 2017 in the virtual school better than for LAC national
- high performance in timeliness of care proceedings.
- strong performance for children placed for adoption
- use of new technology to increase children’s participation
- leaders are open to external scrutiny and act on it including LGA peer reviews and recent additional investment of £1.m in social care by council leaders

Areas for improvement

- The sufficiency of social workers (including permanent staff) and managers with capacity to cope with the need for services and the volume of social worker caseloads;
- The pace of progressing child protection and child in need plans and the quality of practice with children in need;
- The regularity and quality of social work supervision;
- The quality and purposefulness of management oversight and decision making and the existing quality assurance and performance management system;
- The quality of life-story work for all children.
- Consistent application of thresholds within children’s services and across the partnership
- quality and timeliness of assessments, plans and case recording,
- development of edge of care services
- the quality of our performance data and management reports
- permanency arrangements for LAC

What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your area?

9. Ofsted inspected Herefordshire’s local authority children’s services in June 2018. The judgements were as follows:

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

10. . There was a strong match between our self-evaluation and the Ofsted inspection report, focused visit letter and also what PiP authorities have found in their work with us, indicating that we are consistently aware of our strengths and weaknesses. This was reflected in staff feedback on the self-evaluation as well.

11. Some comments we have received from children through MOMO in answer to the question “what’s good in my life right now” told us:

“where I live – because I feel safe and comfortable”

“I have a lot of friends – not falling out as much...”

“can talk to XXX – feel safe”

“to help me have confidence to say the truth because if I don’t there won’t be any proof that my mum and dad argue”

12. Care leavers told us:

“I would like to thank you XXX my social worker for helping me to get where I am now, I am so happy that she came into my life”

“without your help I would probably be dead or in prison”

“Yes I’m not going to lie I had really bad depression but because of everyone’s help and support I got through it. I wanna say a massive thankyou to everyone who has worked with me and made me a better person and all the teams to I would not have made it in life if it wasn’t for the people working with me thanks”.

13. Our early help offer has a positive impact in supporting children and families. The early help family support service have worked with 1505 families and have engaged and supported them in phase 2 of the troubled families programme; with 504 payment by results claims being made.
14. As at February 2018, 100% of families who had attended a parenting programme in autumn 2016, including those with a child in need or child protection plan, were accessing only universal services.
15. The early help service works directly with step down cases and family network meetings work on a locality basis and achieve some positive outcomes for children and families through effective partnership working.
16. The practice in the MASH received positive evaluation from the Ofsted ILACS, the focused visit and the previous peer review and evidenced that children are not left at risk of harm while their referral is considered. Review work highlighted the need to clarify the approach for contact and referrals and revised arrangements have been put in place from October 2018. A high percentage of referrals do not meet the threshold for a social work assessment.
17. The quality and timeliness of assessments is inconsistent and significant improvement to achieve the standard consistently is an area of focus. Some assessments include good descriptions of children’s wishes and feelings and some children benefit from thoughtful and considered assessments with strong multi agency involvement. Not all assessments take sufficient account of previous incidents in children’s chronology. We are now ensuring that work takes place during assessments that has a positive effect.
18. Some children benefit from outcome-focussed plans and this was recognised by the peer review team, who also commented that they could see good examples of direct work by social workers having a positive impact on outcomes. However the quality of

plans is still inconsistent and we recognise that management engagement and evidence of thoughtful decision making is not consistently evident.

19. Within Herefordshire there is not a consistent understanding and approach to childhood neglect because we have not had a structured approach to identifying and assessing the impact of neglect. We have been implementing our HSCB strategy, including adopting the Graded Care Profile 2 across the professional system, but the evidence of its use is too infrequent.
20. Disabled children have their needs assessed and met through an integrated additional needs service which includes both SEN and social work teams. The practice of the social workers in this service has reflected the variability outlined above. An Ofsted Inspection in 2016 commended the outcomes for young people with SEND within the county. This area was recognised as an area of strength in our 2018 ILACS, which noted the improvement since the last inspection in 2014.
21. The number of S47 investigations and the number of referrals that have an outcome of no further action has been disproportionately high. The impact for children and families of unnecessary child protection investigations is of concern and indicates inconsistent application of thresholds.
22. Having maintained a broadly stable number of children on child protection plans in 2016/2017, since July 2017 we have seen a rise in child protection activity from a low of 108 in December 2016 to 236 in January 2018. This has then reduced to 105 as at June 2019. The appropriate application of thresholds is a continued area of focus for the service, and for partners and has been too inconsistent over a long period of time.
23. Herefordshire children do not remain subject to child protection plans for more than two years and there are comparatively low numbers of children with repeat child protection plans. In quarter 1 2019/2020, 16.51% of children made subject to a child protection plan had previously been subject to a child protection plan in the last 2 years. This indicates that children are benefitting from appropriate management and are stepped down at the right time.
24. Approaches to tracking public law outline (PLO) cases to prevent drift have had limited impact, and we are aware of delay particularly between the decision to initiate and issuing proceedings. This means that some children experience delays in decisions being made regarding their future.
25. However, upon initiating proceedings children in Herefordshire are benefitting from timely conclusions of care proceedings, evidenced as being the best performing care centre in the West Midlands and amongst the best in the country. During 2017/18 we achieved 73% of cases completed within 26 weeks with the average being 22.2 weeks. This achievement was praised by the judge and illustrates the strong practice and commitment by social workers.
26. Social work practice has benefited from our recent investment in strengthening our legal services dedicated to children's safeguarding. New appointments have brought significant expertise to the local authority and a close and more energetic working relationship which is being recognised in court.
27. Our number of looked after children is too high for our population, both in comparison with the English average and that of our statistical neighbours. We have put revised panel arrangements in place to provide more robust challenge to requests for children

to enter the looked after system and looks at appropriate solutions for cases. We are aware of challenges in the consistent application of our procedures which has been rectified.

28. As a result of recent criticism by the Courts regarding our approach to children looked after under S20 an extensive review of all such arrangements was undertaken. We have a robust system in place to review these cases within 28 days, including seeking legal advice in all cases.
29. Whilst in our care, most children benefit from stable placements. The number of children in the same placement for over 2 ½ years has increased in the last year. The numbers experiencing 3 or more moves in 12 months is comparatively low.
30. However this is balanced by our recognition that we have not had sufficient focus on achieving permanency for those children in long term care. A LAC reduction strategy has been implemented and children are starting to benefit from a change in culture within our LAC team that recognises the benefits for children of achieving permanency outside the looked after system.
31. Looked after children are supported by our work with colleagues in the health service to increase the quality of health assessments and improve their emotional wellbeing. Looked after children and care leavers are enabled to access HALO leisure vouchers for activities including swimming and gym sessions.
32. Looked after children have benefited from improvements in narrowing the gap between Herefordshire LAC and all pupils nationally in 2017 for key stage 4. At key stage 4 Herefordshire LAC achieved better than national LAC. Looked after children are supported by a strong approach by the Virtual School which was recognised by the peer review.
33. Looked after children benefit from a fostering team that has been successful at recruiting foster carers, outperforming most other fostering services. This enables children to benefit from continuity of education and relationships with family and friends. We continue our marketing and recruitment of foster carers to enable us to meet the needs of children and young people where this is the option identified.
34. The 16+ team build good relationships with young people and are in touch with 83% of our 19-21 year old care leavers at the end of March 2019; this has dropped to 73% at the end of quarter 1 2019/2020. This team has been fragile following a series of internal challenges. Managerial oversight has been in place and recruitment has recently been completed for the management position. Staff have been offered a range of support over this period. There are issues of timely recording of practice that are being addressed which contribute to the performance figures.
35. Care leavers are supported and encouraged to remain with their foster carers under staying put arrangements and to move on to independence when they are ready. We negotiated a new arrangement with SHYPP, young people's foyers, so that the 16+ team can have direct access to 15 units of accommodation.
36. Children are enabled to achieve permanence through adoption and our service performs well. Up to June 2019/ 2020, 27 placement orders were granted and 15 children were adopted. Our adoption team is tenacious in family finding and has been

able to find families for “hard to place” children. 10 families and their children have benefited from additional therapy through the adoption support fund. Herefordshire council has joined Adoption Central England (ACE) regional adoption agency (RAA) jointly with Warwickshire, Solihull, Coventry and Worcestershire local authorities in accordance with central government expectation that all local authorities are part of a RAA by 2020.

37. We have a small population of 5 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Many of these young people have found it isolating to be placed in Herefordshire and have moved to other areas of the country where they have expressed a preference to live, whilst continuing to be supported by Herefordshire.
38. Tackling child exploitation (CE) is a priority for HSCB. We have increased resource to lead on this and missing interventions. Most young people at risk of CE are identified consistently and receive effective support. We are working with multi-agency partners to identify and respond to emerging risks such as County lines. A small number of young people go missing from home or care and they are all offered a return home interview.
39. We offer a service to interview externally placed looked after children within the county. This supports our wider CE intelligence gathering as well as ensuring that the young people are safe and were not harmed whilst missing. The process for recording and monitoring missing episodes for our looked after children placed out of County has recently been strengthened.
40. The Ofsted inspection and peer review found that case recording can be accurate, factual and concise. However, this is inconsistent and particularly in assessment and CP/Court teams there has been a significant period of time where case recording that is out of date and does not reflect the engaged account of work which staff have provided to external auditors and inspectors.
41. The recording of management decisions and supervision is inconsistent. The frequency of supervision is also inconsistent and not of the required standard or recorded frequency in some teams. This is an area of particular focus. Social workers have reported through peer reviews and to managers that they feel supported by front line managers; they feel that they are available and guide them in decision making. This is supported by having an almost permanent management frontline tier. We need to ensure that the support social workers feel is balanced by appropriate challenge.
42. In 2016 the majority of our social work staff were co-located in a modern building close to the city centre. Staff have commented about the positive difference this has made to coordinated work for children.
43. Over the past two years we have reduced our reliance on agency social workers in a number of areas but remain reliant on their work in some of our teams and challenges remain in some parts of our service. We are focussing on retaining our existing staff and have recently improved remuneration and our training offer (informed by suggestions from staff themselves. We now have a permanent management team at head of services and team manager level. This is the first time for a number of years that we have achieved this and should enable a consistent focus on practice and decision making.

44. Following the publication of Herefordshire's serious case review in 2017, alongside informing the HSCB neglect strategy, we developed culturally competent practice which includes consideration of the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) community. Staff attended awareness raising sessions organised by our GRT Liaison lead. We participated in research led by the University of Salford to support a common understanding and practice.

How do you know it?

45. We are determined to improve and the views of children and young people and our staff are vital. Examples of the impact of our consultation with children and young people includes: introduction of MOMO; review of short breaks; development of corporate parenting strategy; Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plan, permanent appointments overseen by Your Voice Matters (our children in care council); development of practice of 16+ team; development of a clear finance policy for care leavers.
46. We were inspected by Ofsted in June 2018 and had a focused visit in January 2019. The findings reflected Herefordshire's self-assessment produced for the inspection and the visit and have been accepted in full by the Council, including cabinet and chief executive.
47. The focused visit in January 2019 reported that since the ILACS inspection in June 2018 that there has been increased stability in the management and functioning of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and assessment service. They also identified that the approach of leaders has resolved a backlog of assessments; has reduced the caseloads and is allowing the teams to focus on the timeliness and quality of assessments. Where children are at risk of significant harm, there is a timely and effective response to help and protect them.
48. Ofsted also highlighted that performance management information was beginning to support some key areas of improvement in key areas of practice; and acknowledge that whilst further work is required to improve the accuracy of performance information, that management grip and understanding of the service has significantly improved.
49. A number of key operational indicators have improved; these include the reduction in social worker caseloads, and increase in the timeliness of visits to children who have a child protection plan and an increase in levels of supervision taking place.
50. There has been a number of key achievements across the service; there has been a reduction in the number of children referred inappropriately into Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a result of the reintroduction of the MASH Partnership forum and multi-agency audit activity in MASH.
51. There has been an improvement in the completion of assessments within timescales; as at the end of June 2019, 90% of assessments were carried out within timescale, an improvement from 39% in September 2018.
52. The director has regular meetings with each operational team. The assistant director holds regular drop-in sessions for staff to raise any issues. Heads of service work regularly in team areas to provide a more informal way for enabling staff to raise their perspectives on their work.
53. Senior manager's interaction with staff has improved; the assistant director and director regularly work in different social care offices and hold regular drop in

sessions for staff. We have taken action to support the retention of staff, which was informed by staff feedback.

54. This is evidenced from feedback provided by our staff to Doncaster Children's Trust who worked with us in January 2019 to assist us in our improvement work.
55. Team managers were asked what one thing would help create the right environment for children's social work to flourish. Answers were:
 - a) Continue to listen more and more of 'you said, we did' – there have been recent encouraging signs of this
 - b) Help to raise morale, particularly through continued involvements – again this was reported to be happening more
 - c) Clarity of the training and development offer to practitioners, to ensure access is fair and equitable.
56. Team managers reported to Doncaster Children's Trust a "considerable improvement in the quality of performance information, it is more accurate than it has been and that they can start to properly performance manage." Furthermore, they stated, "it is our problem to fix" and that it has helped that action has been taken that has "moved cases into the right place." This evidences the beginnings of a change in management culture and management grip since the ILAC in June 2018.
57. The quality and purposefulness of management oversight and decision making has improved with revised panel arrangements being established and embedded. This provides a robust challenge to requests for children to enter the looked after system, and looks at appropriate solutions and alternatives.
58. Operational managers receive weekly activity reports and a monthly information booklet that contains significant amounts of data that enable the HOS and their managers to track performance of their teams. These reports have been developed and put in place since September 2018, giving a range of detailed weekly reports and monthly scorecards. These are being continually reviewed and reflected upon to improve the accuracy and usefulness of reports to aid improvement in social work practice and outcomes for children and young people. This is also reviewed at the AD/HOS meeting so that senior leaders are able to challenge each other. This information is then used to inform their service improvement plans
59. Because of our improved approach to performance, children are receiving more timely visits. Child Protection visits are at 74% in time in June 2019, compared to 69% in September. Looked after Children visits are 83% compared to 65%. Child in Need visits are recorded as 74% compared to 41%. Our timeliness of visits is still not as good as it should be, despite an improving picture. An aspirational target of 95% from 2019/20 has been set and teams are working towards meeting this.
60. Monthly performance challenge sessions which include the chief executive, leader of the council, lead member, group leaders and the chair and vice chair of children's wellbeing scrutiny committee consider both quantitative and qualitative information. This provides a challenging dialogue to inform priorities and drive improvement.
61. We engage with West Midlands Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) annual self-evaluation challenge sessions and benchmark ourselves against regional and national data. Our reflections inform our development plan.

62. We have developed and maintained a range of tracking mechanisms to maintain focus and prevent drift in priority areas including children accommodated under S20, permanence planning and the dispute resolution process. Emerging trends from these trackers have also informed our improvement work, staff training and development.
63. We have a significant role in the HSCB quality assurance and performance sub group which undertakes multi-agency, practitioner led thematic audits on a quarterly basis. This group has a consistent and mutually challenging multi-agency representation. Recent audits have included looked after children, and the MASH. The learning from these audits inform ongoing improvement planning for the Board as well as our self-evaluation and continuous professional development (CPD) programme.
64. We welcomed the visit of the DfE National Advisor who gave positive feedback on Herefordshire's approach as well as providing valuable comment on what we could improve. The areas for improvement have been reviewed by a senior management group, chaired by the Chief Executive and by the council's management board and an action plan has been endorsed, which is incorporated into our improvement work. Within this our Corporate parenting board will be strengthened. It currently meets bi-monthly to understand the experience of our looked after children and care leavers, to scrutinise performance data and to oversee the implementation of our corporate parenting strategy. The council has introduced revised decision making in all council reports, requiring the impact of corporate parenting to be considered as a result and is also in the process of agreeing council tax support for care leavers. Training for members to reflect on their corporate parenting role is ongoing.
65. Annual evaluations of our service are contained within the HSCB Report, the independent reviewing officer report, the local authority designated officer report, private fostering, and children's representation and complaints report. These are considered in detail within the directorate and local authority. A number of these reports are considered by the HSCB to provide scrutiny and challenge.
66. Herefordshire Council commissioned three Local Government Association peer reviews for the Children's Wellbeing Directorate in 2017/18. Two of these reviews were designed to explore elements of current practice and a third considered the directorate's improvement and compliance culture. Their findings are informing our Development Plan. The reviews reflected a strong understanding of individual children and their needs, a clear understanding of what outcomes were being aimed for, evidence of strong support from team managers and social workers valuing this, and positive examples of effective social work practice. The reviews also found that practice was variable and that this included recording. The review confirmed our own assessment of the work that needs to be done.
67. In 2016 Ofsted undertook a review of our Special Educational Needs and Disability Service. The experience was a positive one, and staff were able to demonstrate how they worked together, across sectors, to improve the outcomes for these young people. Children fed back that they are happy, safe and well supported and that they have high aspirations for themselves.
68. Every social work service area has a clear action plan to drive forward improvement and this is monitored on a monthly basis by the directorate leadership team. The council has been clear that its ambition and expectation is for safeguarding services to be good. The Ofsted report and these action plans are important staging posts in monitoring progress to achieve this expectation and ensure that where safeguarding services are needed, they are of high quality.

69. We have established a new approach within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to address how contacts and referrals are being processed has been put in place from the beginning of October 2018;
70. We now have an Early Help Coordinator in MASH to ensure that children are managed in the correct part of the system and stepped up and down appropriately according to their identified needs;
71. We have systematically reviewed all Section 20 cases and taken the relevant action required on all of them, and have put in a system to stop this reoccurring which was acknowledged as good by Ofsted;
72. We identified that some cases were in the wrong teams, we have updated our transfer process and increased our management capacity in our assessment and CP/Court services as well as recruiting social workers to fill vacant posts. This has enabled us to have the right cases in the right team from October 2018.
73. We successfully recruited 20 staff, a combination of permanent and agency staff; and have in place a long term strategy for permanent recruitment, growing and keeping our own; as well as pursuing an urban to rural recruitment and an international recruitment approach during 2019.
74. We have also updated our transfer process to ensure that the cases are in the correct teams and increased our management capacity in our CP/Court services. Case transfers are now being reviewed on a regular basis and the assistant director follows up case transfers with heads of service and team managers to ensure that the cases are in the correct teams. Our caseloads are now of a range of 17 to 25; compared to having caseloads of high 20's to 30s in June 2018.
75. We have not been consistently completing supervision for workers and have implemented a supervision tracker from week commencing 30th July 2018. This is monitored weekly by heads of service and fortnightly by the assistant director; We recognise that the current recorded levels in Assessment and CP/Court teams in particular are not up to our expected standards and have targets and a review approach to drive improvement. We are also reviewing how we record supervision through our MOSAIC system.
76. We are improving our performance data for managers to use. A data book has been circulated from the 1 October 2018 to enable managers to more effectively manage their service areas and be able to plan work. This has been developed with managers and workers to ensure it is owned throughout the service. Heads of service review data weekly with team managers to change our culture of performance.
77. We have increased management capacity and have an additional Head of Service to concentrate on MASH/Assessment. We have increased team manager capacity and have an additional team manager in both the assessment and children protection court teams.
78. We have recruited additional family support workers to provide capacity and take some tasks from social workers. We are actively recruiting social workers and are part of a regional approach;
79. We have increased business support capacity to increase the availability of business support for convening and minuting of meetings therefore releasing social work time from these tasks;

80. We have recruited additional contact workers to clear the back log of life story book work and maintain completion of life story book work, particularly for children who are going to be adopted; the quality of life story work has improved following the recruitment of additional contact workers to clear the backlog and to maintain the completion of the life story book work. We have also appointed a case progression officer to add additional capacity to ensuring improvement in care planning, timeliness and outcomes for children.
81. We have run a 3 month assessment improvement project in the assessment team to improve the quality of children and family assessments. We are not delivering high quality assessments consistently and to timescale and have continued to provide additional support to the assessment teams to support improvement;
82. We have revised panel arrangements and a new panel commenced on the 25th September 2018 which provides a much more robust challenge to requests for children to enter the looked after system and looks at appropriate solutions for cases. These are chaired by the Assistant Director, with Heads of Service also being directly involved in individual case discussions and decisions. Legal services also attend our panel to enable clear, consistent approaches;
83. We have revised our quality assurance approach to enable greater learning and improvement in practice, focusing on specific audit work. We have revised our audit tool, established a framework which will close the loop of learning and will be reviewing its implementation on a monthly basis.
84. We undertake a monthly programme of case file audits. On a quarterly basis we analyse findings to identify themes and priorities for learning and improvement. In addition we regularly undertake a range of thematic audit work informed by agreed priorities and findings are considered by our senior management team to inform our development plan. These have included an audit of practice of cases in PLO, supervision, effectiveness of our audit programme, and admissions to care.

What are your plans to maintain or improve service?

85. We have run a comprehensive assessment improvement project in the assessment teams to improve the quality of children and family assessments. We are not delivering high quality assessments consistently and this is a continued area of focus. We are now reporting improvements in assessment completion timescales, and have continued to provide a focus on the quality of assessments, including the voice of the child and direct work with children. We have agreed to implement Signs of Safety and will be implementing this commencing in the Autumn of 2019
86. We have revised our quality assurance approach to enable greater learning and improvement in practice, focusing on specific audit work. We have revised our audit tool, established a framework, which will close the loop of learning by holding bi-monthly practice learning sessions.
87. Our overall goal is to improve the quality of the service we offer to children, young people and families so that they receive a consistently high quality service that would be judged as good by Ofsted.
88. We have established our Service Improvement plans for Safeguarding and Family Support Services which set out our key actions for improvement. They are focused on the areas that Ofsted summarised as requiring improvement:

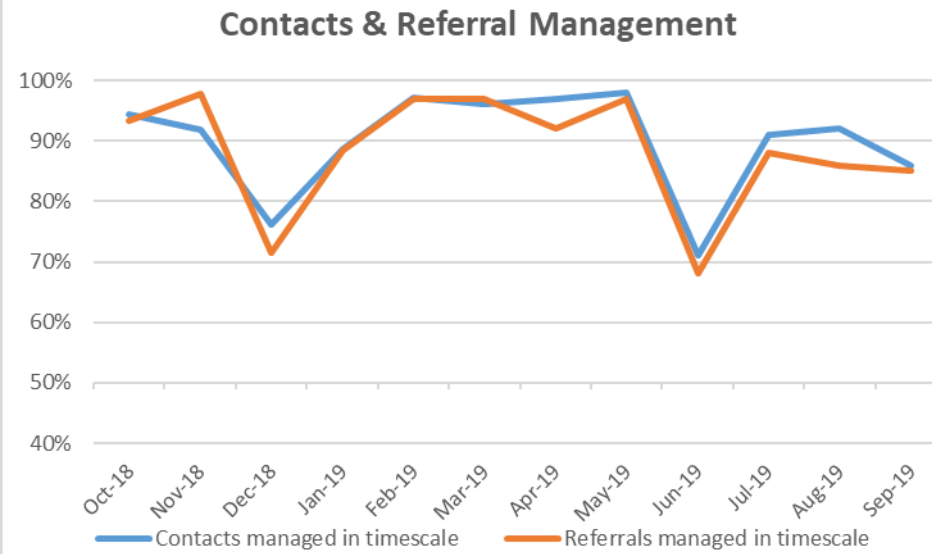
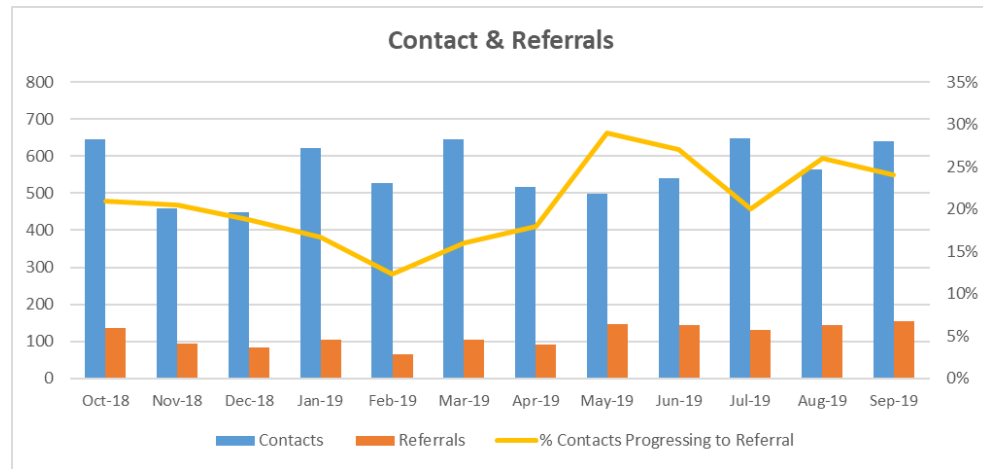
- Senior leadership urgency in implementing a robust and timely action plan to deliver improvements and to address deficits in social work practice;
- The sufficiency of social workers and managers with capacity to cope with the need for services and the volume of social worker caseloads;
- Senior managers' interaction with social workers to enable staff to feel listened to;
- The pace of progressing child protection and child in need plans and the quality of practice with children in need;
- The regularity and quality of social work supervision;
- The quality and purposefulness of management oversight and decision making and the existing quality assurance and performance management system;
- The quality of life-story work for all children;
- We are continuing to focus on the other areas for improvement set out in the body of the Ofsted report from ILACS and the suggested areas for improvement from our Focused Visit. Our improvement plans capture the actions required to continue to drive improvement forward

89. The improvement plans will continue to be refreshed and updated on a monthly basis. The initial focus was on short term actions to address key areas for improvement; the improvement plans that have now been developed for safeguarding and family support will be refreshed and renewed. The plans are led by heads of service and are reviewed monthly by the assistant director with a highlight report being considered by the senior management team. Cabinet is kept informed of progress against the action plan as part of the Council's performance reporting process. The plan includes clear responsibilities and a process for monitoring. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will review the progress on the action plans regularly.
90. Herefordshire is working closely with the Department for Education's (DfE) regional improvement and support lead for the West Midlands and has made specific links with Staffordshire LA to develop our approach to edge of care and with Doncaster LA to implement Signs of Safety; to develop our performance management culture, including management grip, performance and quality assurance, including the IRO service. We will also involve Doncaster in our edge of care work.
91. We have significant workload pressures due to social worker vacancies and the impact of high LAC numbers, historic high numbers of CP cases, an inconsistent approach to children in need and poor management oversight and decision making in some areas. Cabinet and management board agreed additional funding of £1.6 million to address this. This funding is being used to recruit to practitioner and manager levels, business support, performance management, a case progression officer and increase investment in preventative services. This recruitment activity is overseen by a weekly project board, including the council's head of human resources and chief finance officer.
92. Agree and implement the multi-agency domestic abuse risk and referral pathway that is currently under development. Work is also commencing on a new domestic abuse strategy to inform the recommissioning of domestic abuse services for 2019.
93. We will train social workers on working effectively using the PLO in recognition of quality improvements required in this area. We have established a task and finish group to implement recommendations from thematic audits which have highlighted the need for practice improvements in PLO and permanence planning.

94. A detailed plan to achieve permanency arrangements for up to 80 looked after children and young people has been agreed within the local authority and progress is being made. This is being reported bi-monthly to the chief executive, cabinet members and the children's scrutiny committee.
95. A care leaver's offer is being developed in consultation with care leavers; this will include strengthening our approach to ensure that more care leavers are engaged in education, employment or training.
96. We have awarded our contract to deliver more specialist support for our unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and we will expand our English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision and hope that this will encourage UASC's to choose to stay in Herefordshire.
97. We aim to develop our approach to prevention and edge of care on a multi-agency basis to fundamentally change the profile in Herefordshire and reduce the number of children and young people who need to be looked after or supported through child protection plans in line with the new council's aspirations.

September 2019

Referrals & Assessment



Source of Contacts and Referrals	Total Contacts	% of Contacts	Total Referrals	% of Referrals	% of Contacts Progressed to Referral
Education Services	2	0.31%	1	0.64%	50.00%
Health services - A&E (accident and emergency department)	5	0.78%	1	0.64%	20.00%
Health services - General Practitioner (GP)	10	1.55%	1	0.64%	10.00%
Health services - Health Visitor	6	0.93%	5	3.21%	83.33%
Health services - Other eg. hospice	5	0.78%	2	1.28%	40.00%
Health services - Other primary health services	64	9.94%	18	11.54%	28.13%
Health services - School Nurse	6	0.93%	3	1.92%	50.00%
Individual - acquaintance eg. neighbours / child minders	7	1.09%	2	1.28%	28.57%
Individual - family member / relative / carer	34	5.28%	7	4.49%	20.59%
Individual - other Individuals e.g. strangers / MPs	9	1.40%	3	1.92%	33.33%
LA services - social care, for example, from another local authority's adults social care	32	4.97%	19	12.18%	59.38%
Other - including children's centres, independent agency providers or voluntary	35	5.43%	6	3.85%	17.14%
Other Legal Agency - incl. courts, probation, immigration, CAFCASS or prison	30	4.66%	6	3.85%	20.00%
Police	322	50.00%	49	31.41%	15.22%
Schools	77	11.96%	33	21.15%	42.86%
Total	644		156		24.22%

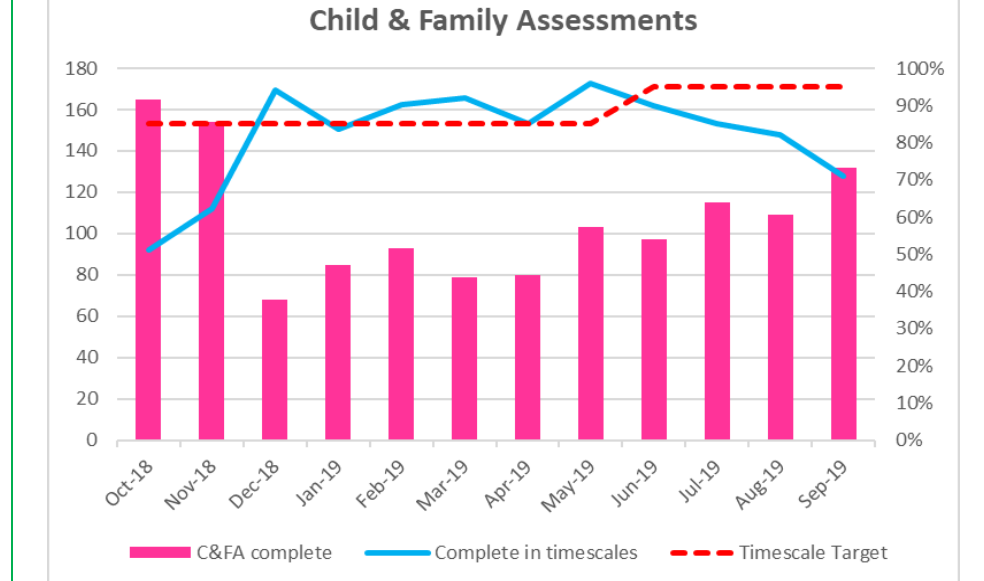
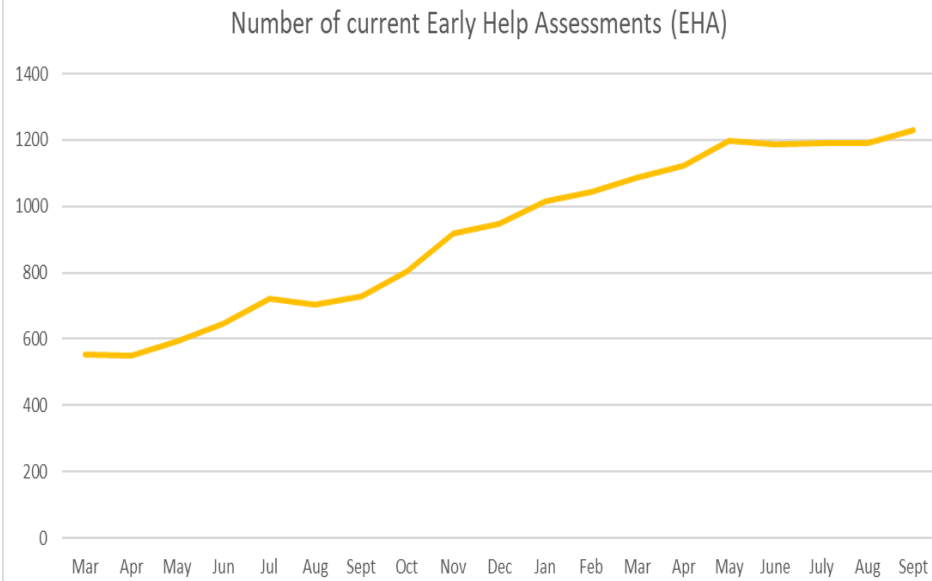
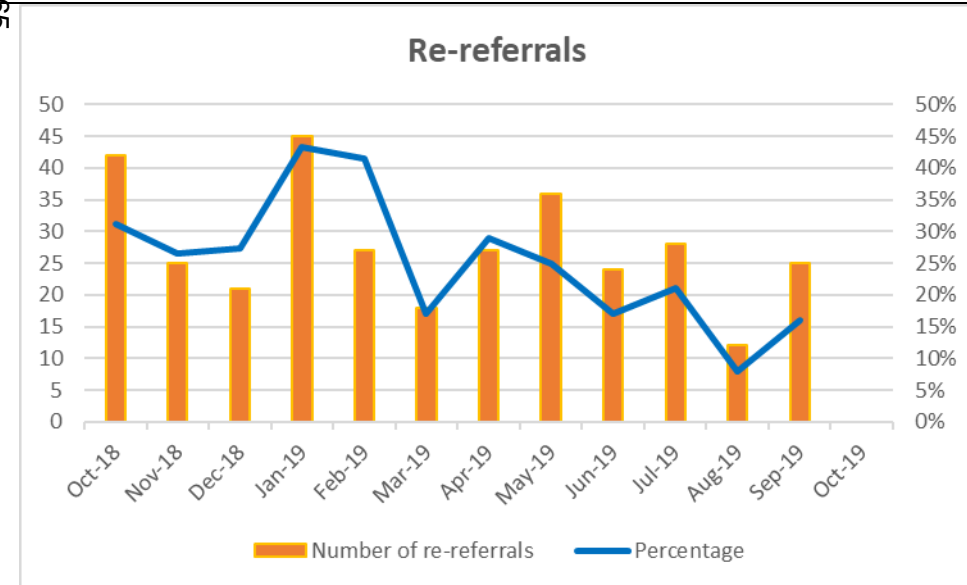
Contacts and Referrals: In September, 24% of contacts progressed to referral. This is an decrease % progression compared to last month but is an increase compared to 1st October 2018 (21%), when the new contact and referral process was implemented.

Contact & Referrals Management: The above graph shows the proportion of Contacts and Referrals which have been managed within the revised timescale of the next working day.

Contacts and referrals managed in timescales has decreased slightly in September. The year to date % for contacts is 89% and for referrals is 86%.

Contact/Referral by agency: The table above shows the amount of Contacts and Referrals received during September.

As can be seen from this table, the majority of our activity continues to be driven by the Police.



Percentage of Re-referrals: The re-referral rate is based on referrals on cases that have previously been open in the last 12 months. The proportion of re-referrals in September was 16%, which is an 8% point increase from August.

Early Help Interventions: As can be seen from the above graph, the number of cases open to Early Help is similar to the last few months.

Child & Family Assessments (CAFAs): In September, the number of CAFAs completed increased. 71% of assessments completed met timescales, this is another decrease compared to last month, and falls short of our 95% target. The YTD position is has now fallen to 84% (from 88% last month).

Re-referral % comparison							
Hfd Sept	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
16%	19%	22%	20%	25%	17%	20%	19%

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

Assessments in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Sept	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
71%	84%	83%	78%	85%	86%	84%	86%

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted). Of the assessments completed in September, it was identified that 80% of cases reported seeing the child within 3 days. This an improvement in the level of

Incomplete Child & Family Assessments: As at the end of September, there were 238 assessments awaiting completion. The table below summarises where the incomplete assessments sit.

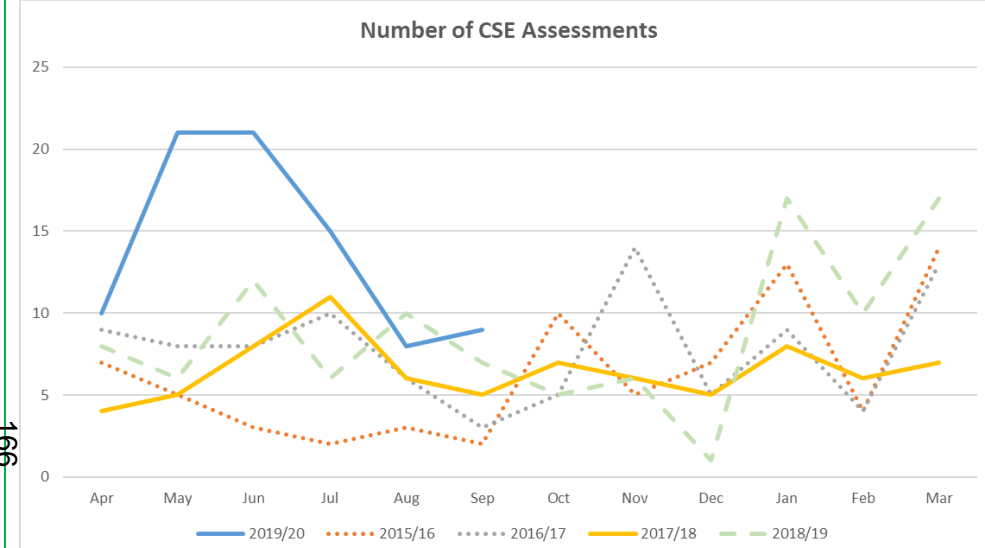
Team	Total Number awaiting completion	Number beyond 45 days
Assessment 1	98	4
Assessment 2	94	1
CP & Court 1	12	8
CP & Court 2	13	7
CP & Court 3	6	2
CWD	14	6
LAC (old team)	1	1
Total	245	29 (12%)

Outcomes of Child & Family Assessment: The following shows the outcomes from the C&F assessments completed during the month. Typically, a strategy meeting is called from the contact/referral, rather than the end of the assessment.

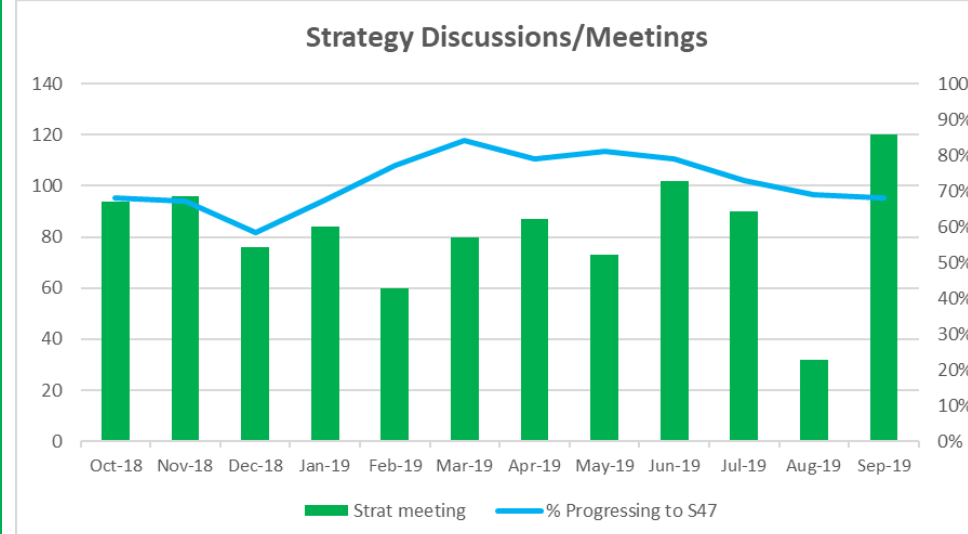
Referral Outcome	Assessment Outcome	
Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	5
	Review Assessment Only	12
	Close Case	10
No-Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	15
	Strat	6
	Review Assessment Only	10
	Close Case	68

performance from last month, August which was 74%. Assessments in Mosaic have now been changed to reflect the intention to see children within 3 days.

Team	Total Number completed (September)	Percentage in timescale	Percentage seen in 3 days
Assessment 1	62	71%	76%
Assessment 2	63	76%	86%
CP & Court 1	1	0%	100%
CP & Court 2	1	0%	100%
CP & Court 3	3	67%	67%
CWD	1	0%	0%
16+	0	-	-
Total all teams		71%	80%

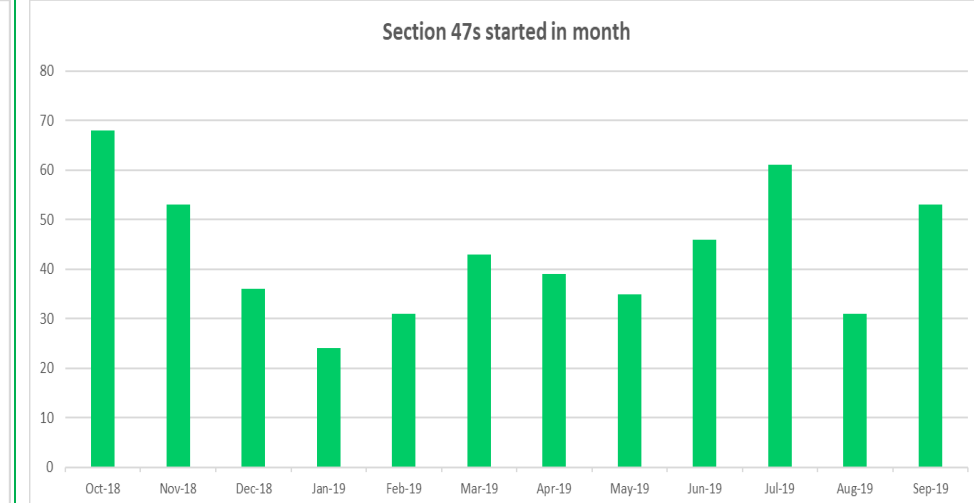


CSE Assessments: During September, there were 9 CSE assessments completed, which is slightly higher than last month and the same period in 2018/19.



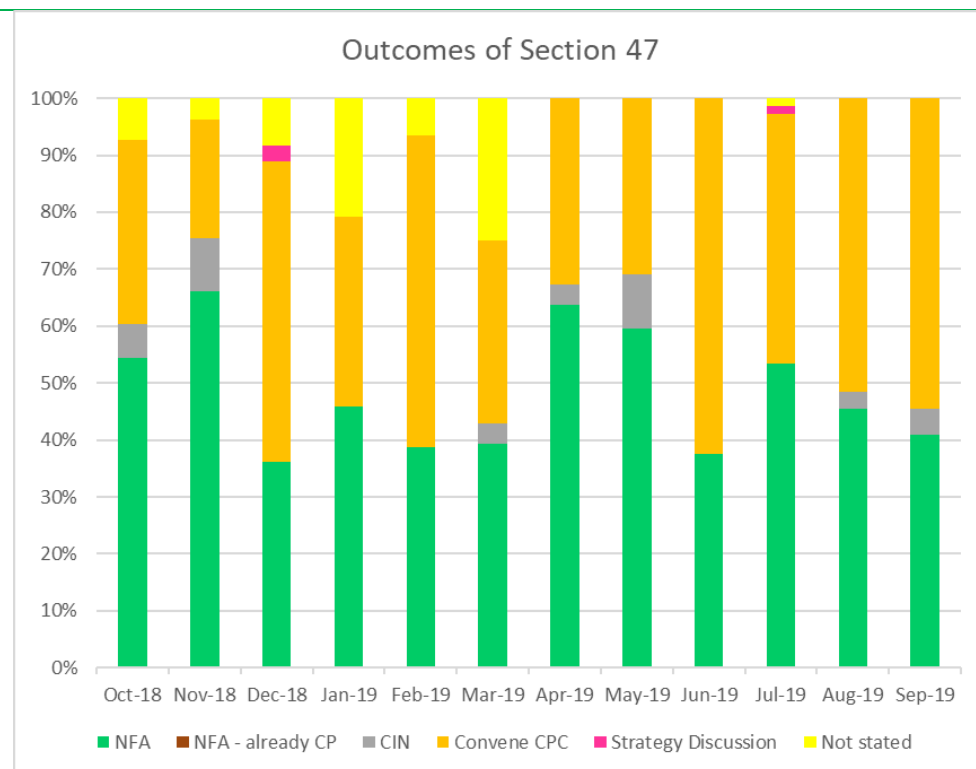
Strategy Discussions: During September, there was a large increase in the number of Strategy Meetings undertaken. There was a slight decrease in the progression of cases to Section 47 – during the month 68% of cases progressed.

Year to date figure is 75% progressing to Section 47.



Section 47s: The number of Section 47s started in September shows an increase level of activity since August, with 53 being started.

Last year, we had a very high rate of Section 47's compared to national averages, and were also above the WM average, albeit WM authorities had some significant outliers (both high and low).



Section 47 Outcomes:

The graph to the left shows the outcome of those Section 47s started in the period. In September, 41% of Section 47s were NFA'd. 55% were progressed to ICPC.

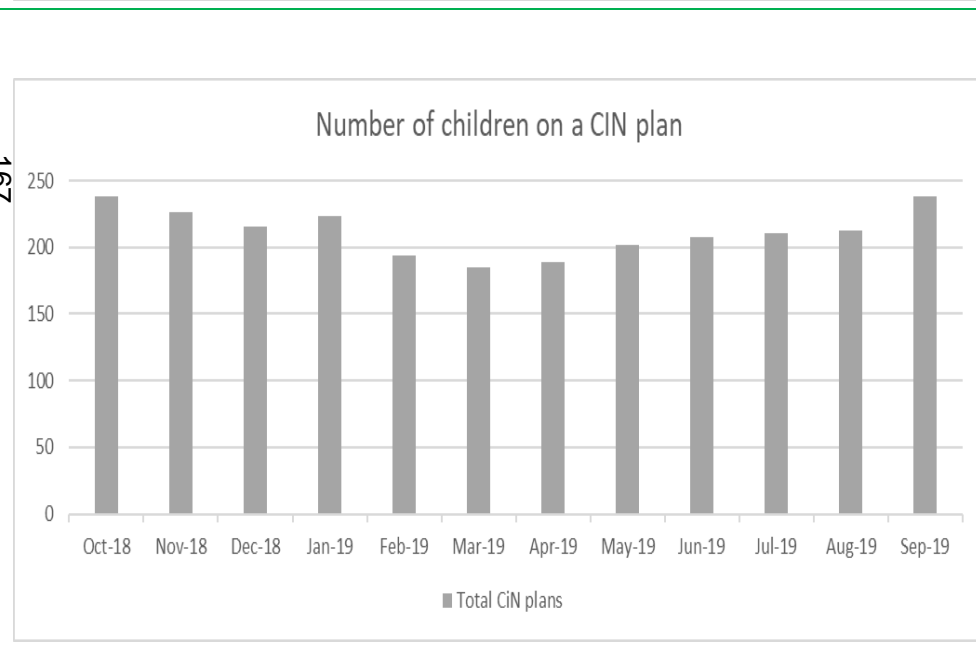
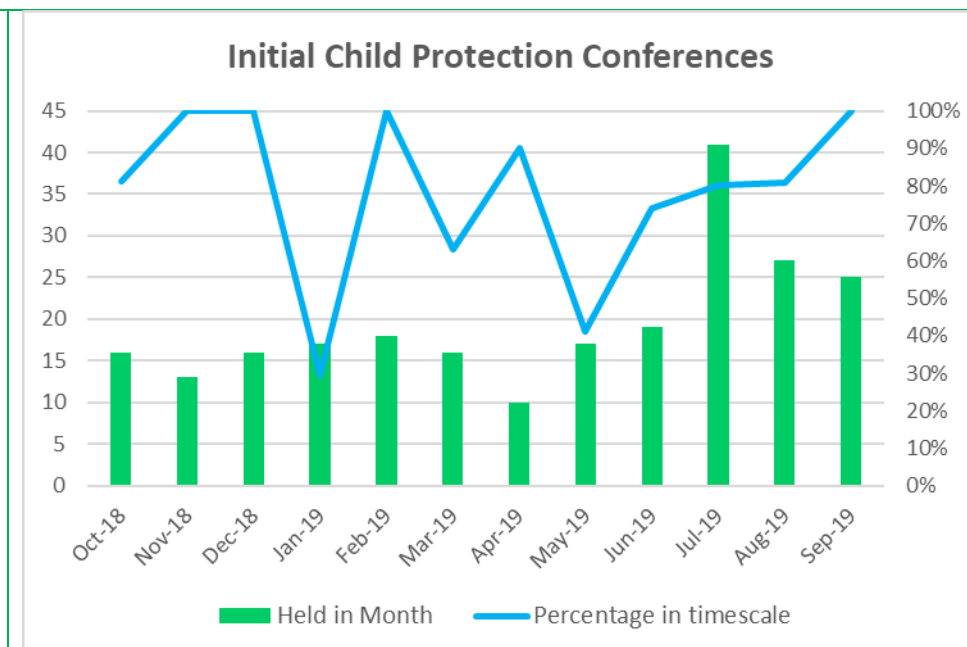
For the whole year to date 2019/2020, 51% have been NFA'd, 44% progressed to ICPC.

Initial Child Protection Conferences: In September, performance around ICPC timescales were outstanding. There were 25 ICPCs this month and 100% were held in timescale compared to 81% last month.

The year to date figure is 79% ICPC in timescale.

ICPCs in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Sept	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing *
100%	79%	77%	79%	77%		82%	76%

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



Number of children on a CIN Plan: The graph to the left shows the number of children on a CIN Plan

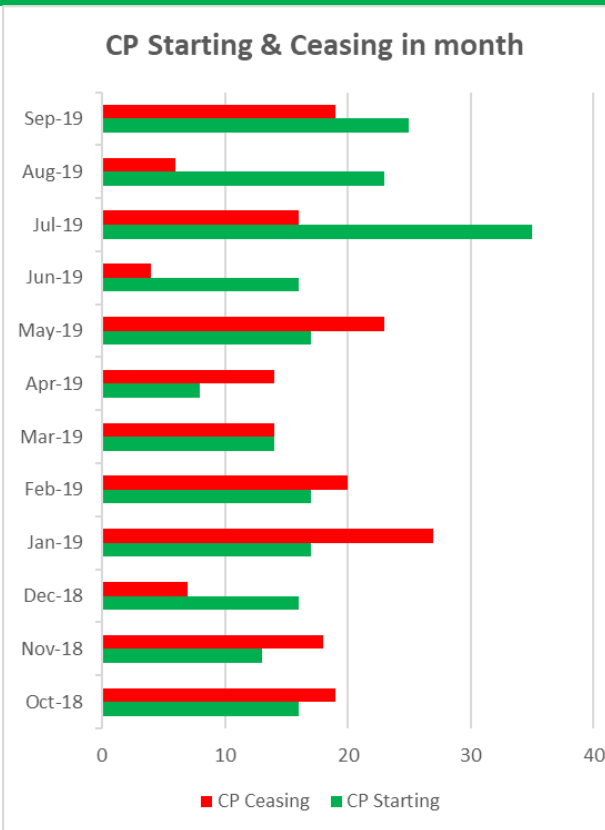
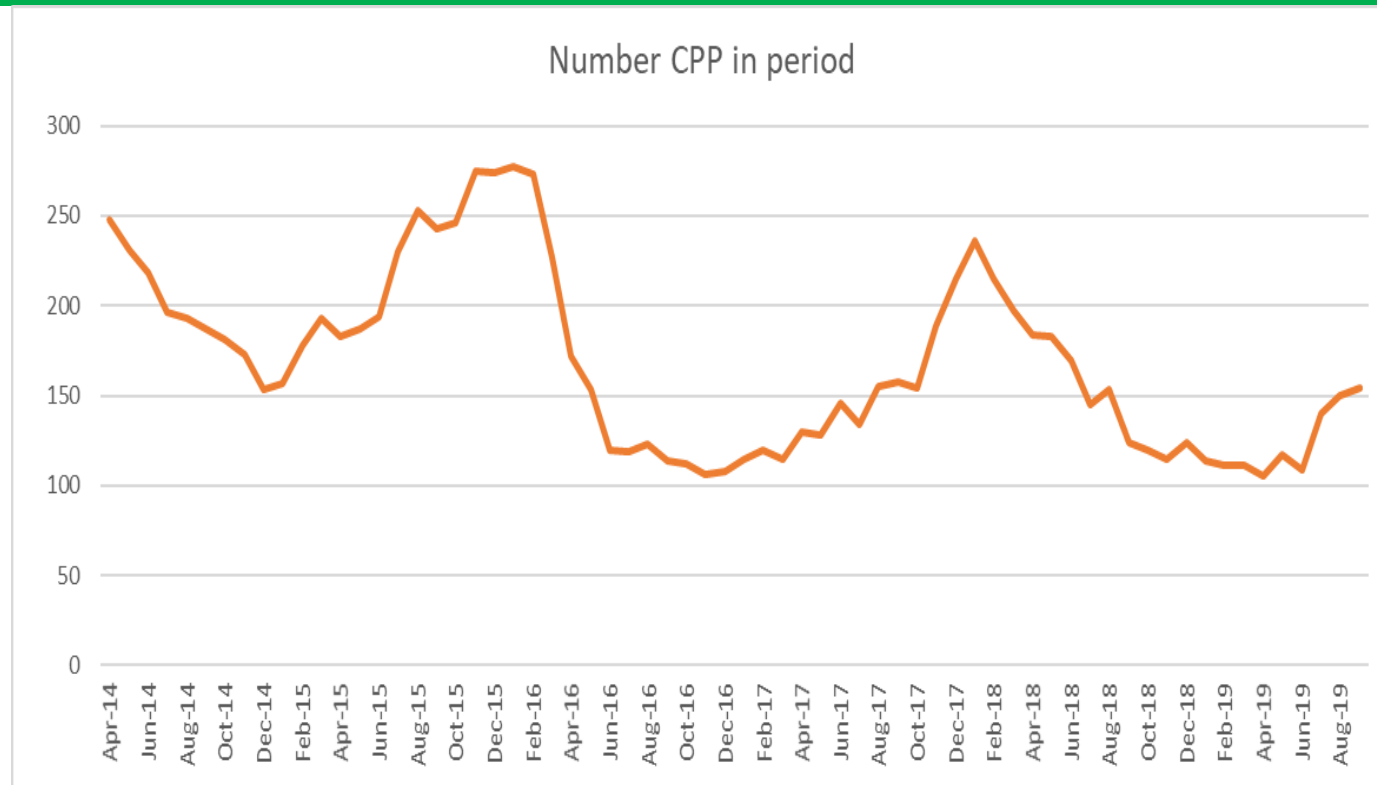
There has been a slight increase in the numbers of children on a CIN plan during the last month from 213 in August to 238 in September.

The table to the right splits the current number of children identified as CIN, between those with an incoming plan and those with an incomplete plan.

The current numbers at the end of September of CIN are broken down as follows

	CIN Plans		Total known CIN
	Incoming/ Proposed	Started/ Complete	
Total	45	167	212
Assessment 1	11	5	16
Assessment 2	20	8	28
CP & Court 1	7	32	39
CP & Court 2	6	37	43
CP & Court 3	14	28	42
LAC Team 2	0	2	2
CWD	7	50	57
16+	1	9	10
Unallocated	0	0	0

Child Protection Plans



Current CP at Month End:

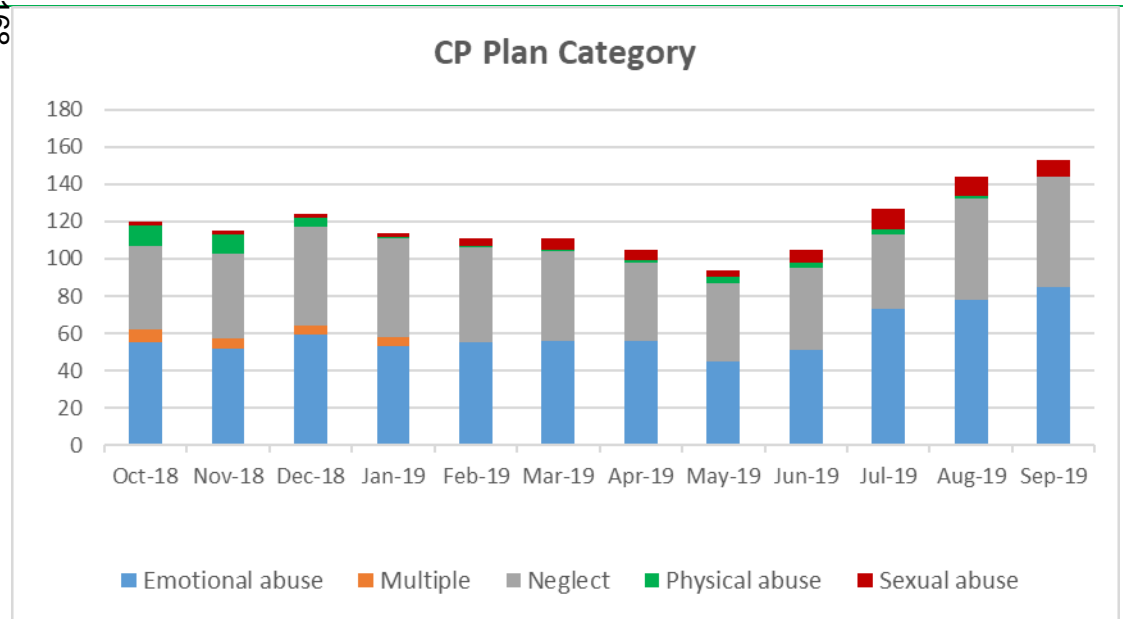
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Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans: The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan during September has risen again compared to the last month. 7 CP plans ceased in September due to no longer meeting thresholds, 11 became LAC and 1 moved out of the local authority area.

The graph to the immediate left illustrates the numbers of children starting and ceasing CP plans in each month. The age and gender profile is on the graph below.

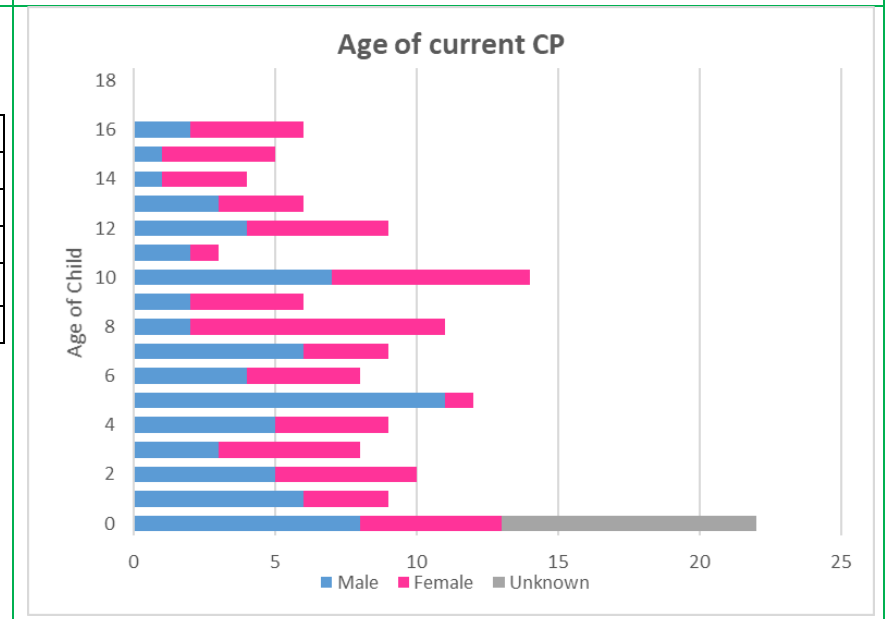
CP Rate (per 10,000)						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
43	45	38	50	54	33	34

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



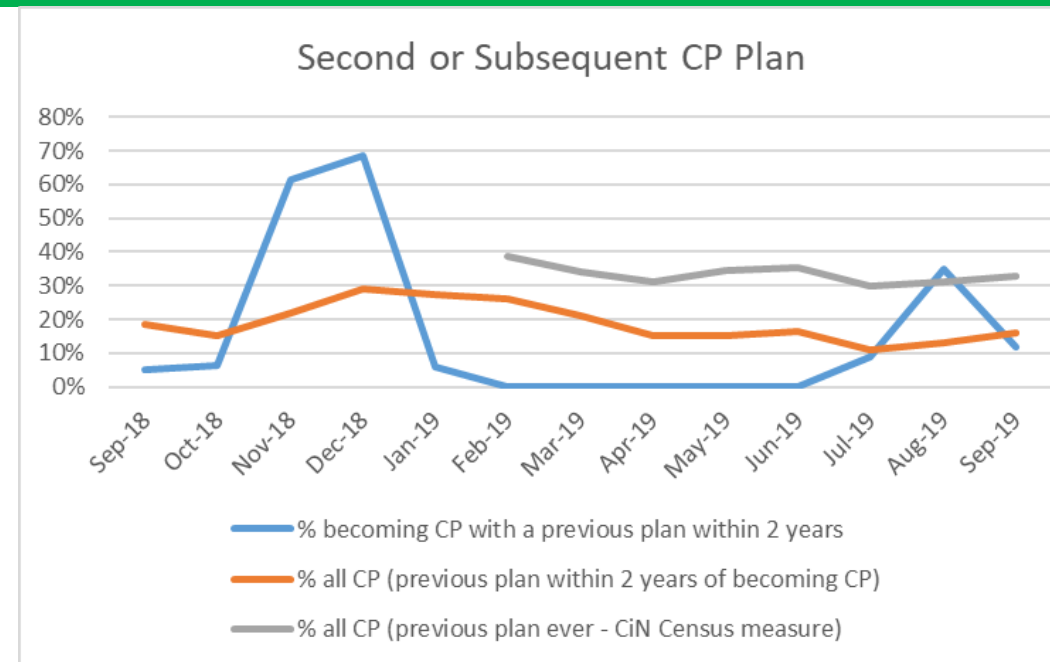
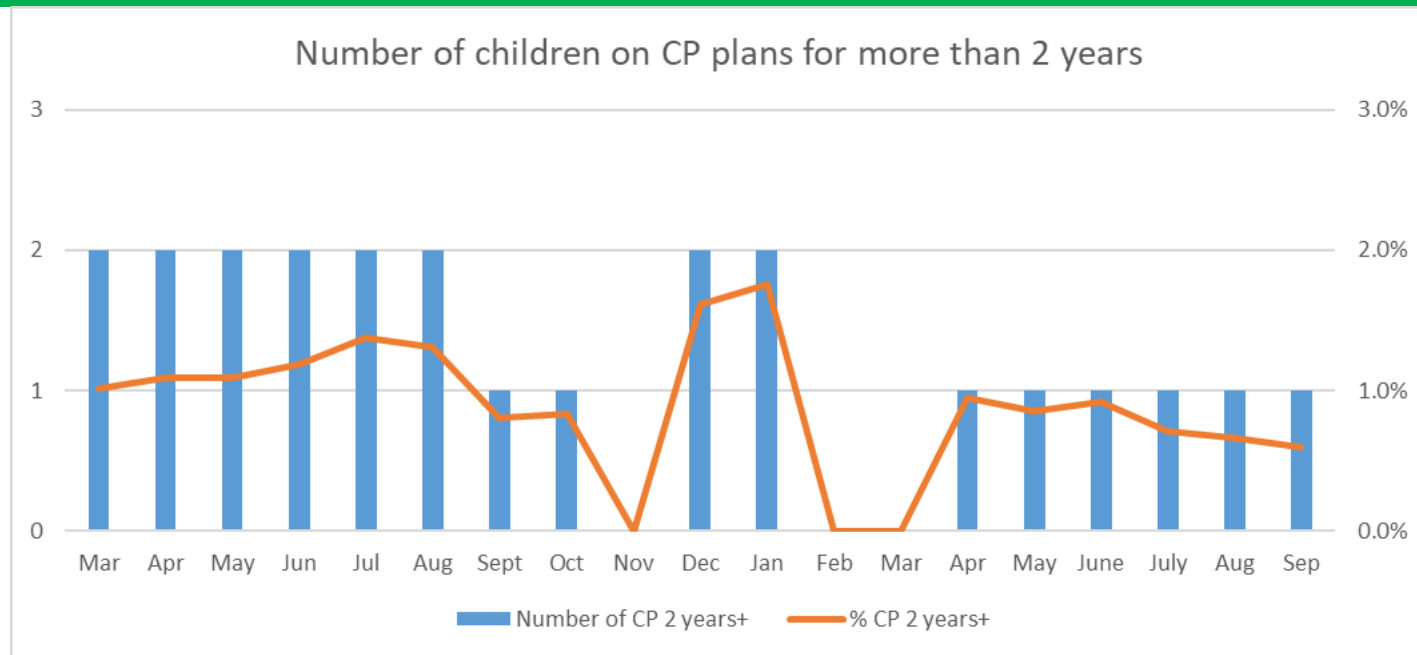
	Apr 19	May 19	June 19	July 19	Aug 19	Sep 19
Emotional	56 (53%)	45 (48%)	51(49%)	73(57%)	78 (54%)	85 (56%)
Multiple	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neglect	42 (40%)	42 (45%)	44(42%)	40(31%)	54 (38%)	59 (39%)
Physical	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	3(2%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
Sexual	6 (6%)	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	11(9%)	10 (7%)	9 (6%)

The above table gives the categories of CP plans as at the last day of the month



Reason for Child Protection Plans: During September, 85 children were identified as having a plan in relation to emotional abuse, 59 for neglect, 9 for sexual abuse and 0 for physical abuse.

Child Protection Plans



Child Protection Plans open for 2 or more years: In September, there was one child that had been on a plan for over 2 years.

CP 2+ years (for those currently CP)							
Hfd September	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
1	1	2	3	1			

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

Second and Subsequent Child Protection Plan: Of the 25 children becoming CP during September, 3 of these had been subject to a plan in the last 2 years. Of the 169 children that had a CP plan during September, 24 (16%) had been subject to a plan within 2 years of the start of their current plan (33% had been on a plan at any stage prior to the current plan)

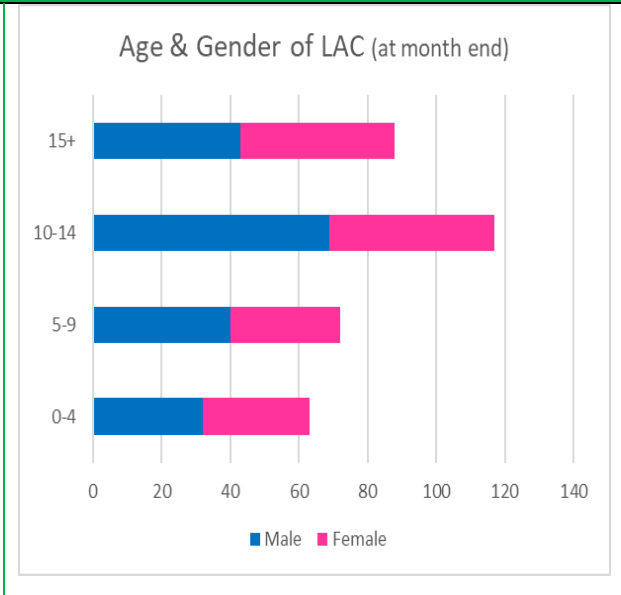
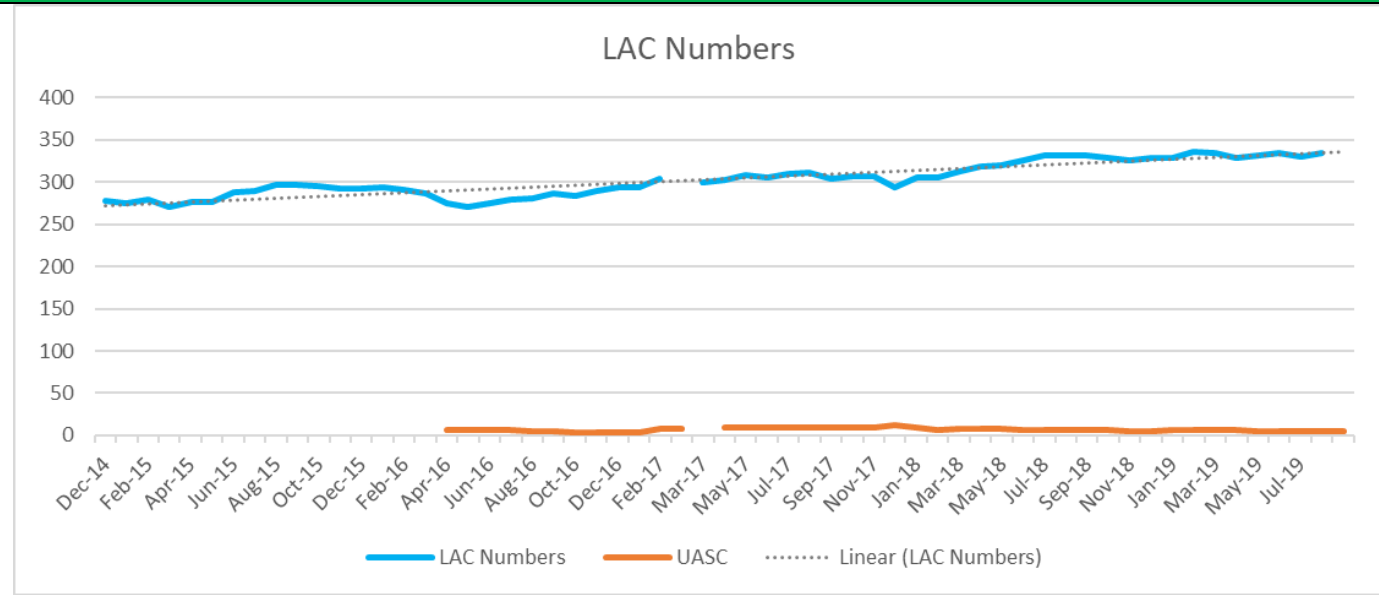
The graph above has now been changed to give the percentage of cases which become CP in month which have previously been subject to a plan in the previous 2 years (blue line) and the percentage of cases that were CP at the end of the month that had been subject to a plan within 2 years of the start of their current plan.

CP 2 nd and subsequent						
Hfd September	England	Stat Neigh	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
16%	-	-	11%			

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

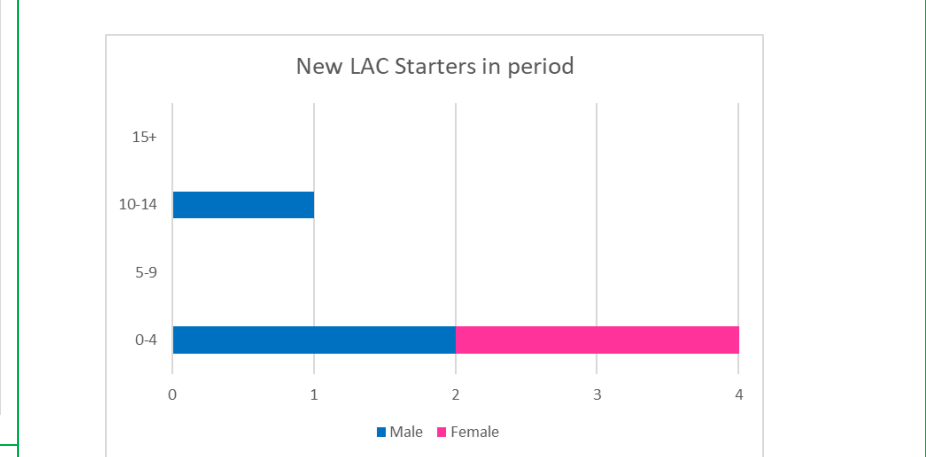
Female Genital Mutilation: In September 2019 no cases of FGM have been identified.

Looked After Children



Current LAC at Month End:

340



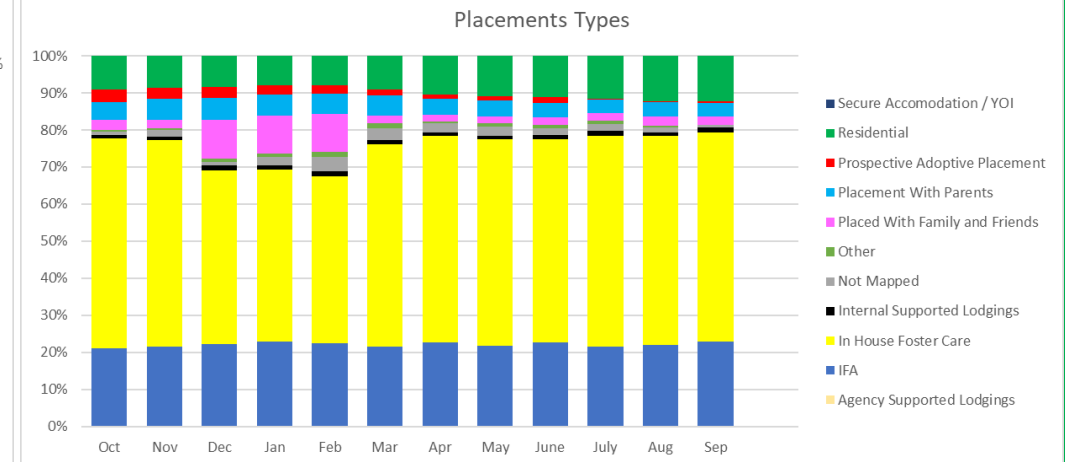
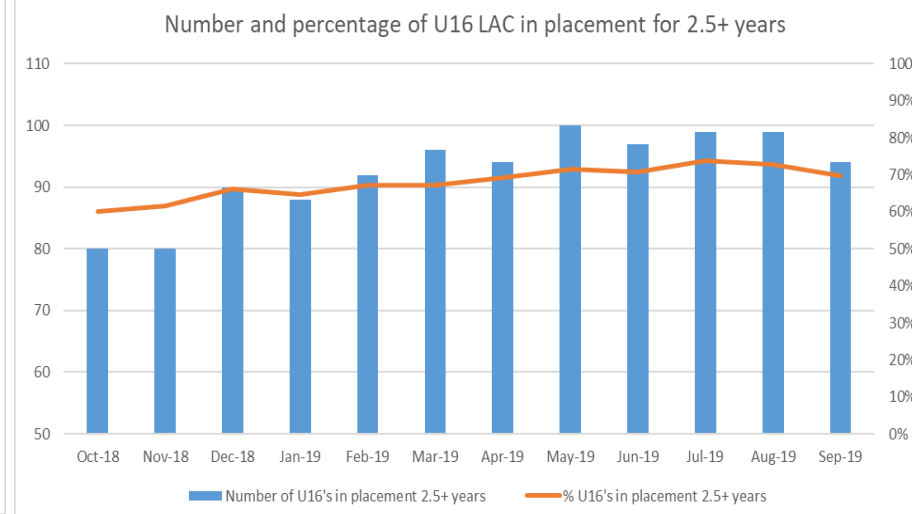
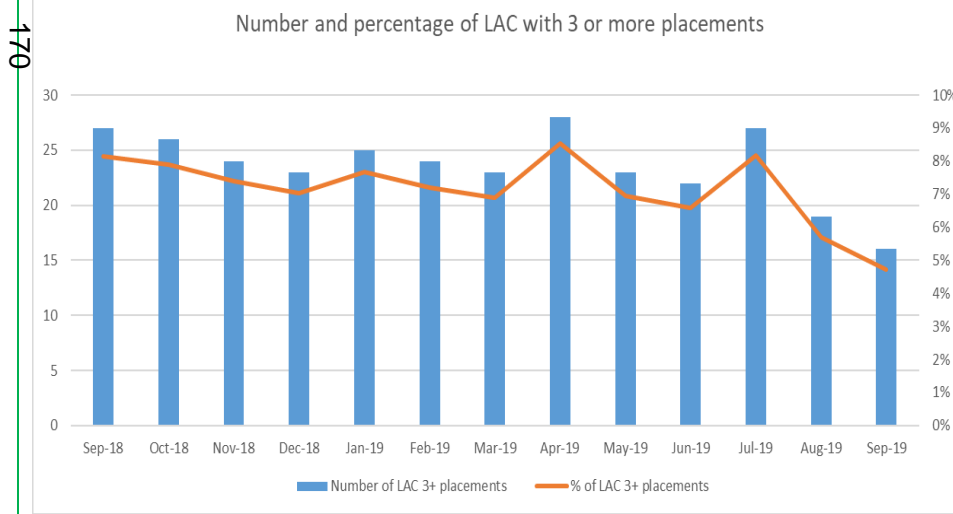
LAC Numbers: As at the end of September, the number of Looked After Children was 340.

LAC Rate (per 10,000)						
Herefordshire current	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
95	64	53	78	73	52	46

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

New LAC in Period: During September six children became LAC, five aged 4 or younger, and one aged 10-14.

LAC Cessations: One child ceased LAC September because they had moved into independent/supported living and the other because they had turned 18.



Number of LACs with 3 or more placements: The number of children who have been subject to 3 or more placements has seen small fluctuations over the last few months. September has seen a 1% point drop since August.

LACs in the same placement for 2.5+ years: The number of children who have remained in placement for 2.5+ years has been reasonably constant over the last 6 months.

Current LAC Placements: Distribution of LAC placement types had shifted a little during the last 6 months, with an increasing proportion of children placed with family and friends which was balanced by an overall reduction in in-house foster care. However, March - September shows that there has been a reduction in the proportion of placements with family and friends and an increase of in-house placement. There is still a small number of unmapped placements this month.

% LAC with 3 or more placements in last 12 months						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
5%	10%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%

% LAC 2.5+ yrs in same placement						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
70%	70%	71%	68%	67%	72%	72%

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

Care Leavers

	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Cohort	41 (up 2)	34 (up 2)	35 (down 8)	110 (down 4)
LA in Touch	78%	74%	57%	70%
In Education, Employment or Training	46%	50%	26%	41%
In Suitable Accommodation	80%	91%	83%	85%

The information shows the proportion of Care Leavers, between 19 and 21 that are in touch in EET or in suitable accommodation.

% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Touch						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
70%	88%	88%	90%	84%	91%	86%
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Suitable Accommodation						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
85%	84%	86%	84%	83%	89%	81%
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 in Employment, Education or Training						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
41%	51%	52%	50%	50%	61%	56%

*2017/18 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours West Midlands & OfSted).

Fostering & Adoption

Fostering

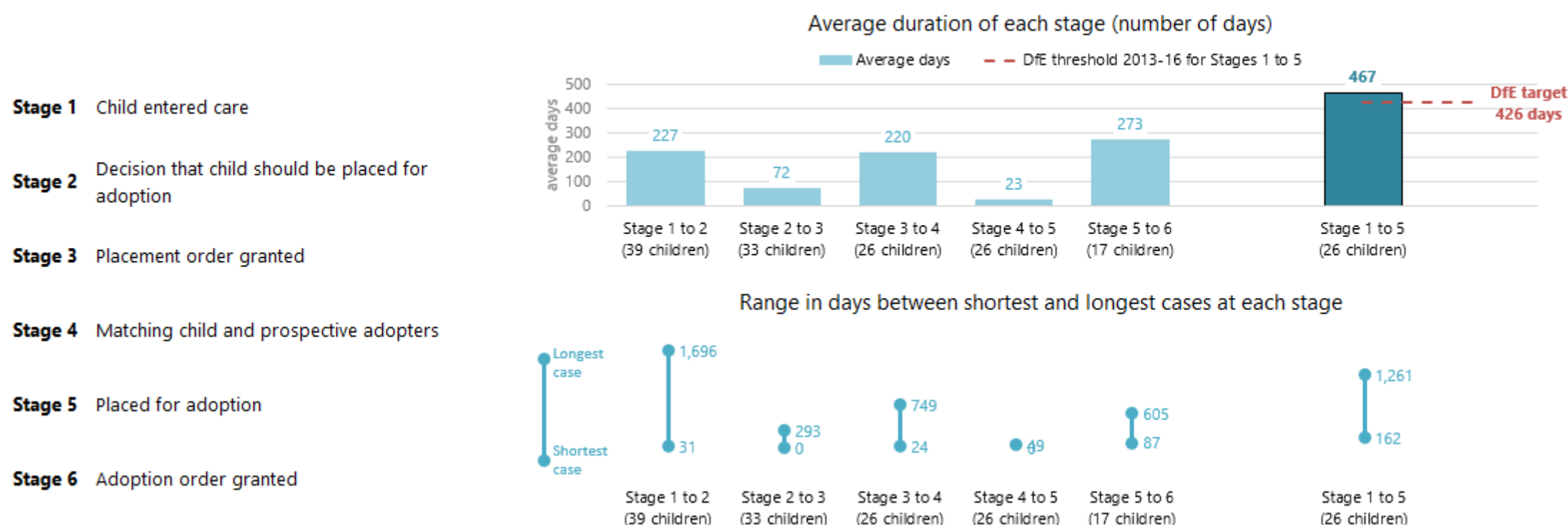
This remains an early view of the data, which needs further cleansing work.

	March 2019		April 2019		May 2019		June 2019		July 2019		August 2019		September 2019	
	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage
In-House	5444	70%	5420	69%	5700	73%	5522	71%	5731	56%	5750	56%	5620	56%
IFA	2140	27%	2191	28%	2141	27%	2070	27%	2070	21%	2183	21%	2222	22%
Residential	62	1%	59	1%	93	1%	62	1%	1036	10%	1055	10%	1084	11%
Other	155	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1357	13%	1315	13%	1315	12%

Adoption

The following information is lifted from Annex A from the 14th October, based on children adopted, waiting to be adopted, or having an adoption decision reversed in the last 12 months. There has been next to no change in the reported average times in the graph below compared to last month.

Timeliness of each stage of the adoption process



Weekly Action Plan Metrics:

The following information is taken from the most recent weekly metrics.

Case Supervisions @ 30/09/2019

Count of Supervision Step Status	Supervision Step Stat						
Allocated Team Name	Within 3 Months	4 - 6 Months	6 Months +	No Complete Supervision Step	No Supervision - New Allocation	Grand Total	3 Within Months
16+ Team	48	14	9			71	68%
Assessment Team 1	13	2	2	2	3	22	59%
Assessment Team 2	17	4		3	4	28	61%
Child Protection & Court Team 1	58	22	6	4	6	96	60%
Child Protection & Court Team 2	49	15	19	1	3	87	56%
Child Protection & Court Team 3	85	19	13		6	123	69%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	77	12	6			95	81%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	94	5	6			105	90%
Children with Disabilities	65	26		1	3	95	68%
Grand Total	506	119	61	11	25	722	70%

70% of CP cases have supervisions within the last 3 months

77% of LAC cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

61% of CIN cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

70% of cases have a supervision within the last 3 months.

Count of Step Status	Supervision Step Stat						
Step Status	Within 3 Months	4 - 6 Months	6 Months +	No Complete Supervision Step	No Supervision - New Allocation	Grand Total	Within 3 Months
CIN	145	59	14	9	11	238	61%
CPP	104	11	20	2	11	148	70%
CPP and LAC	2	1			1	4	50%
LAC	255	48	27		2	332	77%
Grand Total	506	119	61	11	25	722	70%

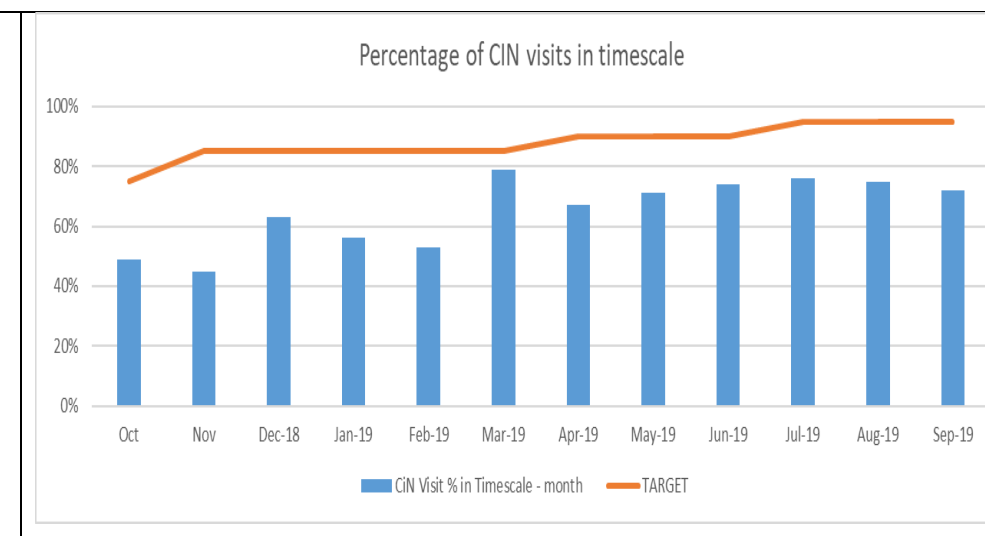
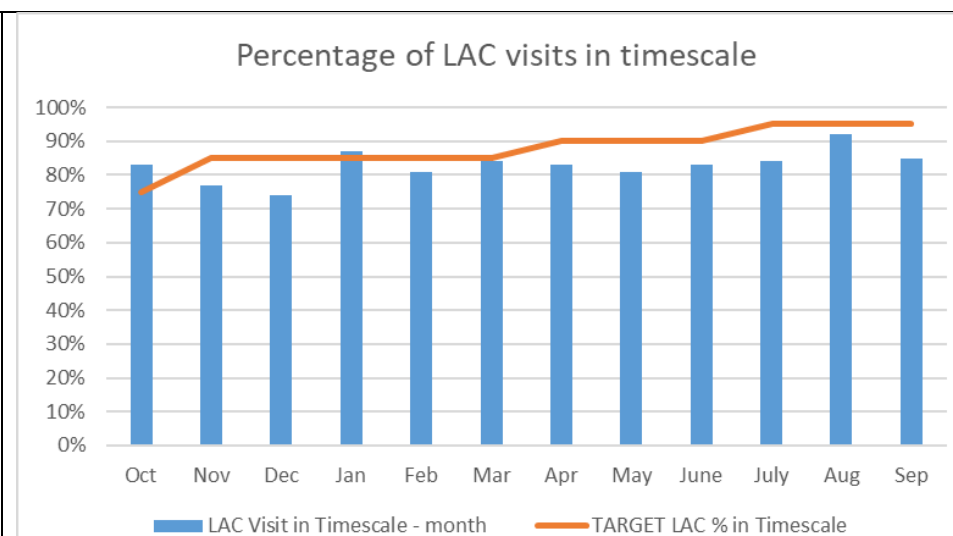
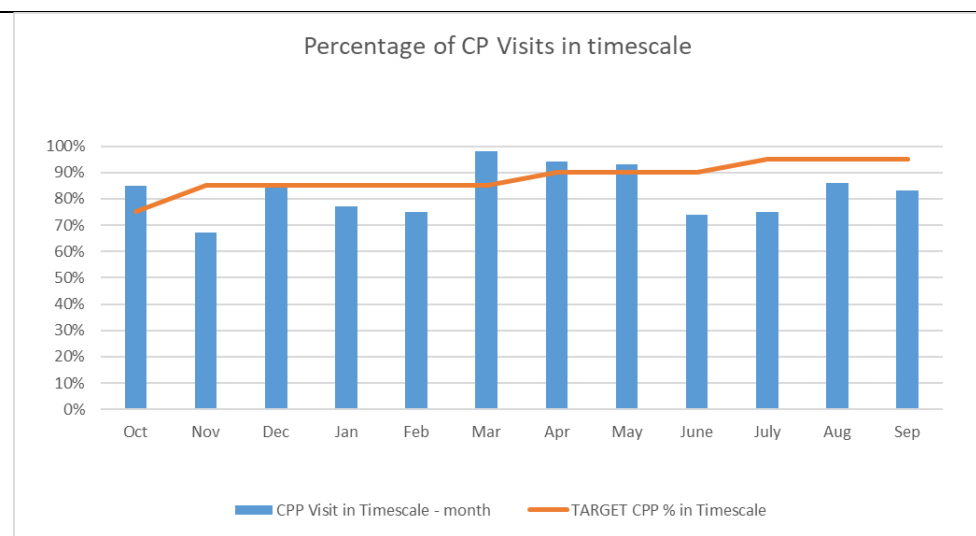
Worker Supervision

172

Operational Teams	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)		% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)		% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	
	July		August		September	
	Mid Month	Month End	Mid Month	Month End	Mid Month	End Month
Head of S&R	25	75	33	100	60	100
Assessment 2	67	100	0	100	50	100
LAC1	0	88	13	100	38	100
CP/Court 1	0	71	0	100	17	100
Principal IRO	0	50	0	100	0	100
HOS (MASH, Assessment Teams)	0	100	0	100	0	100
LAC2	0	100	0	100	0	100
Head of LAC	0	80	17	100	0	100
Head of Additional Needs	100	100	100	100	0	100
16+	42	54	0	54	0	100
Early Help (Nicky Turvey)	33	100	52	100	38	100
Social Care Family Support	28	100	50	85	24	76
MASH	0	100	25	33	0	75
Fostering	14	74	32	100	18	68
Head of Fieldwork	60	100	0	80	20	40
CWD	25	100	8	83	23	23
LAC Support	6	100	12	100	13	21
CP/Court 3	0	75	25	100	0	0
Assessment 1	17	100	0	75	0	0
CP/Court 2	33	40	0	0	0	0
Principal Social Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Permanence						new

During September, 69% of operational staff's supervision was undertaken (84% end August) and 92% of the business support staff was undertaken (96% end August) – this gives an overall position of 74%, which was a decrease from August (87%).

Business Support Teams	% completed in month (target 90%) (10% below target is Amber)		% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)		% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	
	July		August		September	
	Mid month	Month End	Mid Month	Month End	Mid Month	End Month
Head of Business Support	75	100	75	100	100	100
Placements	0	100	0	100	0	100
Business Support Team Leaders	0	97	0	94	0	94
Business Support 1	0	100	0	100	0	60

CP, LAC, and CIN Visits


The above chart shows CP Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month

At the end of September, 83% of CP Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 85% and is below 95% target.

The following table gives a summarised team position at the end of September.

Team	Allocated CP Cases	% in timescale
CP Court 1	38	82%
CP Court 2	33	92%
CP Court 3	52	83%
LAC 2	1	100%
CWD	2	0%
16 +	1	100%
TOTAL	127	86%

The above chart shows LAC Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month

At the end of September, 85% of LAC Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 85% and is below 95% target.

The following table gives a summarised team position at the end of September.

Team	Allocated LAC Cases	% in timescale
Assessment Team 1	1	100%
CP Court 1	15	75%
CP Court 2	6	67%
CP Court 3	17	74%
LAC 1	95	100%
LAC 2	100	85%
16 +	58	75%
CWD	37	79%
TOTAL	329	85%

The above chart shows CIN Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month

At the end of September 72% of CIN Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 73% and is below 95% target.

The following table gives a summarised team position at the end of September.

Team	Allocated CIN Cases	% in timescale
Assessment 1	9	0%
Assessment 2	7	43%
CP Court 1	36	89%
CP Court 2	42	71%
CP Court 3	36	64%
LAC 2	2	100%
CWD	46	83%
16 +	8	75%
TOTAL	186	72%

Caseload and Worker Allocations

Team	Number of All Workers Holding Cases in Team	Team Workers as per Establishment (FTE) (Only Caseholder)	Number of Cases by team	Average Caseload per team based on workers holding cases	Average Caseload Per Team - based on all FTE of the team Establishment	Number of SW Worker Role Holding Cases in Team	Number of SW Worker Role holding more than 20 Cases for pro rata	Percentage of qualified social workers holding more than 20 cases (SW on zero caseload are not included in)	Maximum cases held by qualified social worker (workers with 0 caseload are not included in)
16+ Team	7	7	83	12	12	6	0	0%	19
16+ Team PA	8	8	148	19	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	
16+ Virtual Worker	1	n/a	128	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Assessment Team 1	7	7	132	19	19	7	3	43%	30
Assessment Team 2	6	6	131	22	22	5	3	60%	30
Child Protection & Court Team 1	6	5	91	15	18	5	3	60%	24
Child Protection & Court Team 2	5	5	87	17	17	5	3	60%	24
Child Protection & Court Team 3	7	7	143	20	20	5	4	80%	26
Children With Disabilities (CSW only)	7	7	112	16	16	6	3	50%	22
Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	6	6	99	17	17	4	2	50%	21
Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	7	7	105	15	15	5	2	40%	22
MASH		n/a	1	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Safeguarding and Review Team Total Establishment 8.6						540			
by Role CP Conference Chair	9	n/a		153	Weekly report CP figure is 152 5 YP 519110,519111,574902,588204 & 593519 on CP weekly report but no CP Chair allocated on the Case Allocation report. 6 YP 584781,584782, 591542,506073 523217,534235 showing as CP on the Case allocation report but not on the CP weekly report				
by Role IRO	9	n/a		341	Weekly Report LAC Figure is 336 5 YP have IRO allocated but are not showing as LAC on the Case Allocation report of which:- 4 YP 594535,591337,592569, and 589340 are all adoption records 545078 has an IRO allocated but is not showing as LAC on the weekly report				
by Role Independent Chair	8	n/a		46					

The table to the left reflects the number of qualified social workers within each team which are holding *more than* 20 cases. Also provided is the maximum number of cases held by a worker in the teams.

Assessment Team 2 and CP Court 1 & 2 have 60% of their SW holding more than 20 cases. CP Court Teams 3 has 80% of their qualified SW carrying more than 20 cases.



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Monday 25 November 2019
Title of report:	Work programme 2019 - 2020
Report by:	Democratic Services Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review the committee's work programme 2019/20 and agree amended terms of reference for the peer on peer spotlight review.

The attached work programme was agreed at the meeting of the committee on 16 September. Since this meeting the following changes have been made to the work programme: the January meeting has been moved from 20 January to 14 January 2020, 1:00 p.m.; the young carers item has been moved from the 25 November 2019 meeting to the 14 January 2020 meeting; and the examination results performance report has been moved from the January meeting to the 16 March 2020 meeting.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- (a) reviews and agrees the 2019/20 work programme at appendix a and determines any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme;
- (b) approves the amended terms of reference (appendix b) for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review; and
- (c) notes the recommendation tracker in appendix c.

Alternative options

1. It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources. The committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is focused, effective and produces clear outcomes. Topics selected on the work programme should reflect issues of current importance facing children's services at Herefordshire council.

Key considerations

Work Programme

2. The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in. Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the chairperson, vice chairperson and the statutory scrutiny officer. The current version of the work programme is attached at appendix a.
3. Since the previous meeting of the committee on 16 September the following changes have been made to the work programme: the January meeting has been moved from 20 January to 14 January 2020, 1:00 p.m.; the young carers item has been moved from the 25 November 2019 meeting to the 14 January 2020 meeting; and the examination results performance report has been moved from the January meeting to the 16 March 2020 meeting.

Constitutional Matters

Task and Finish Groups

4. A scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances but the review is likely to be attended by all members of the committee and chaired by the chairperson.
5. The scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken by a task and finish group, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors (nominees have been sought from group leaders and will be presented at the meeting) and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. The committee will appoint the chairperson of a task and finish group.
6. The committee is asked to determine matters relating to the convening of a task and finish group including the scope of the review to be undertaken, the chairperson, membership, timeframe, desired outcomes, what will not be included in the review and whether to co-opt any non-voting members to the group. Such co-optees would consist of individuals with valuable skills and experience that would assist a task and finish group to undertake a review (see below).
7. At its previous meeting on 16 September 2019 the committee agreed a scoping document for the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review. Since this meeting a change to the

scoping document has been made to include a greater focus on the voice of the child. The amended scoping document is contained in appendix b which the committee is asked to approve. The amendment to the scoping document is shown in red, italic script.

Co-option

8. A scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed workplan and/or task and finish group membership.
9. The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

10. A schedule of recommendations in the current administrative council term is appended to this report as appendix c.

Forward plan

11. The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming key decisions are available publically under the forthcoming decisions link on the council's website, as below:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?&RP=0&K=0&DM=0&HD=0&DS=1&Next=true&H=1&META=mgforthcomingdecisions&V=1>

Suggestions for scrutiny from members of the public

12. Suggestions for scrutiny are invited from members of the public through the council's website, accessible through the link below. There have been no suggestions for scrutiny received from members of the public since the previous meeting of the committee.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved/4,

Community impact

13. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.
14. The items for scrutiny contained on the work programme and the scoping document proposed for the spotlight review will allow the committee to make recommendations to the executive to improve services for children in Herefordshire. The committee intends that through the making of recommendations (subject to acceptance by the executive) it contributes to priorities in the corporate plan to: keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and secure better services, quality of life and value for money. Recommendations arising from the spotlight review will include a consideration as to how improvements can be made to the safeguarding of children and how to advance the role of the council as a corporate parent.

Equality duty

15. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The scoping document for the spotlight review proposes an inquiry which will produce recommendations for the executive to consider and respond to. The response of the executive will need to give due regard to the council's public sector equality duty.

Resource implications

17. The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny can be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.
18. The councillors' allowance scheme contains provision for co-opted and other non-elected members to claim travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances on the same basis as members of the council. If the committee agrees that co-optees should be included in the membership of the spotlight review they will be entitled to claim allowances.

Legal implications

19. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function. The development of a work programme which is focused and reflects those priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the committee and the council to deliver a scrutiny function.
20. The Scrutiny Rules in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council's constitution provide for the setting of a work programme, the reporting of recommendations to the executive and the establishment of task and finish groups, as below.
21. Paragraph 4.5.28 of the constitution explains that the scrutiny committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. In setting its work programme a scrutiny committee shall have regard to the resources (including officer time) available.
22. Under section 4.5.10 of the constitution a scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances. The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. It

will be a matter for the task and finish group to determine lines of questioning, witnesses (from the council or wider community) and evidence requirements.

Risk management

23.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.
There is a reputational risk to the council if the spotlight review does not produce recommendations.	The scoping document for the spotlight review provide a structure and process to facilitate the production of cogent recommendations.

Consultees

24. The work programme is reviewed at every committee meeting and during business planning meetings between the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The work programme attached at appendix a has been discussed at a work programming session of the scrutiny committees on 6 June 2019 and was agreed by the committee at its last meeting on 16 September 2019.

Appendices

- Appendix a – Work Programme 2019/20
- Appendix b – Amended scoping document for peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review
- Appendix c – Recommendation tracker 2019/20

Background papers

None identified.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

25 November 2019

Work Programme 2019/20

Meeting date: 15 July 2019– 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 5 July	
Item	Description	Report Author	Form of Scrutiny*
Corporate Parenting Strategy – annual report	To consider the updated action plan to the corporate parenting strategy and receive a performance report against the objectives.	Gill Cox	Performance review
Adoption Service and Fostering Service annual reports	To receive the annual reports from the adoption and fostering services and consider the outcomes and recommendations. To make recommendations to the cabinet member on the operation of the services during 2019/20.	Gill Cox	Performance review
Work Programme 2019/20	To agree the schedule of business for the children and young people scrutiny committee for 2019/20.	Matthew Evans	
Briefing notes	<p>Update on the Herefordshire Children and Young People Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Transformation Plan 2015 – 2020 - CCG</p> <p>New Safeguarding Monitoring Arrangements – To receive details of proposed safeguarding monitoring arrangements (replacing the HSCB in Herefordshire under new legislative provisions.</p> <p>Outcome of internal audit review of section 20 arrangements and processes.</p>	<p>CCG</p> <p>Liz Elgar</p> <p>Internal Audit</p>	
Meeting date: 16 September 2019 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 6 September	

Accommodation based support service for care leavers	To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the cabinet decision for an accommodation based support service for care leavers with complex needs.	Amy Whiles/Ewen Archibald	Pre-decision call-in
Youth Justice Plan	To endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2019/20 for approval by full Council and consider whether there are any comments the committee would wish to make that would inform the production of the Plan for 2020/21.	Keith Barham	Pre-decision call in of Policy Framework Item
Briefing notes	Multiagency panel relating to looked after children mental health services. Introduction of the care leavers' covenant. Supported housing for young people project referral levels.	Gill Cox Gill Cox Gill Cox	
Meeting date: 25 November 2019 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 15 November	
Update on reducing the number of looked after children (LAC)	Updates concerning efforts to reduce the number of looked after children (LAC).	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 2017-21 and the budget proposals for 2020-21 relating to Children and Families.	Andrew Lovegrove, Audrey Clements	Pre-decision call-in/Policy review and development
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan 2019/20	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2019 / 2020.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Meeting date: 14 January 2020 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 6 January	
Young Carers Service	To consider an update report on progress with the implementation of the young carers service. To involve evidence from Young Carers.	Nicky Turvey, Richard Watson	Performance review

Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan 2019/20	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2019 / 2020. To include an update on work with West Mercia Police regarding referrals to the Multi-agency safeguarding hub.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review – outcomes and recommendations	To receive the outcomes and recommendations of the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review.		Policy review and development
Child Exploitation task and finish group – outcomes and recommendations	To receive the outcomes and recommendations of the child exploitation task and finish group.		Policy review and development
Meeting date: 16 March 2020 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 6 March	
School Examination Performance	To consider school performance of summer 2018 and make recommendations to cabinet on how the effectiveness of the school improvement framework and strategy could be enhanced.		Performance review

- Business to allocate in 2019/20**
- Early Help Strategy – policy review and development item
 - Child Exploitation – task and finish group (**three meeting dates arranged**)
 - Peer on peer abuse in schools – Spotlight Review (**arranged for 16 December**)
 - Elective Home Education (EHE) – Spotlight Review
 - Speech and Language Therapy – task and finish group

* *Pre-decision call-in, Performance review, Policy review and development*

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Peer on Peer Abuse in schools Spotlight Review – Scoping Document

Title of review	Peer on Peer Abuse in schools Spotlight Review
Scope	
Reason for review	<p>The work programme of the children and young people scrutiny committee has identified the issue of peer on peer abuse to be considered at a spotlight review. Department for Education statutory advice¹ defines peer on peer abuse as consisting of (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying (including cyberbullying); • Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; • Sexual violence and sexual harassment; • Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and • Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. <p>There is a concern regarding reports of increasing levels of peer on peer abuse and this spotlight review will consider available data regarding the incidence of peer on peer abuse in all Herefordshire schools including primary, secondary and post-16 settings. The review will also assess the incorporation of peer on peer abuse into child protection policies.</p>
Links to the corporate plan	<p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire corporate plan and other key plans and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and • Secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
Summary of the review and terms of reference	<p>Summary:</p> <p>The review will receive data on the incidence of peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire schools. It will learn of statutory guidance relating to peer on peer abuse and child protection policies in schools. It will consider policies in place at schools to address peer on peer abuse and assess their effectiveness. It will look at the role of the Council, the Police and voluntary/charitable organisations to assist schools, pupils and their parents.</p> <p>The review will ensure that a focus is retained on the experience of children and young people; to understand how work undertaken by stakeholders supports them, educates them, prevents incidents from occurring and seeks to change behaviour if it has occurred.</p>
	<p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The spotlight review will:</p>

¹ [Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2018](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive a definition of and understand the nature of peer on peer abuse and consider latest statistics concerning its incidence in Herefordshire schools; • Develop an understanding of recent statutory guidance and the requirement for schools to ensure that child protection policies include procedures to address peer on peer abuse. • Examine selected child protection policies in place at Herefordshire schools to ensure that they take account of statutory guidance and contain procedures to hear the voice of the child. • Receive evidence from teachers and school professionals on the challenge posed by peer on peer abuse and the introduction of polices designed to meet the challenge. • Engage teachers and school professionals to assess the success/effectiveness of policies to address peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire schools. • Develop an understanding of the role of the Council to: provide advice to schools on the production of peer on peer abuse policies; undertake preventative work; and raise awareness. • Engage with West Mercia Police to understand how incidents of peer on peer abuse are dealt with and how the Force works with schools. • Understand how other agencies such as therapy services and voluntary/charitable services assist schools, children and their parents. Witnesses for these sectors will be asked to present the voice of the child. • To look at examples of best practice from other local authority areas and possible implementation in Herefordshire. <p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All members of the children and young people scrutiny committee - Councillor Peter Jinman - Councillor Jeremy Milln - Councillor Christy Bolderson
What will NOT be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination of any individual cases concerning peer on peer abuse.
Potential outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the current statistics and data in respect of peer on peer abuse; • Assurance that the advice schools are receiving is compliant with statutory guidance; and • Assurance that the Council is working with schools and local agencies to support the introduction of effective policies to address peer on peer abuse.
Key Questions	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is peer on peer abuse and what are the different forms; • What are the latest statistics for the incidence of peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire schools;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What statutory guidance exists regarding the incorporation of peer on peer abuse in schools' child protection policies; • What work does the Council undertake with Herefordshire schools to introduce peer on peer abuse policies; • What preventative work is being undertaken to address peer on peer abuse; • Are those policies that have been introduced in schools effective in addressing peer on peer abuse; • Where a case of peer on peer abuse cannot be resolved at school how is it escalated or what is the course of action followed; • How the police deal with incidents of peer on peer abuse and how they work with local schools; • How other agencies including therapy and voluntary/charitable services assist schools, pupils and their parents?
Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet member children and families Cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety
Key stakeholders / Consultees	Internal – Education (Children's and Families) External – Schools in Herefordshire – Herefordshire pupils and parents of children at schools in Herefordshire – through governing bodies – West Mercia Police – Therapy services
Potential witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers in Education department at Herefordshire Council. • Teachers and governing body representatives from schools in Herefordshire. • Therapy services • Voluntary/Charitable organisations <p><i>Voice of the Child – as part of the review: charities in attendance; the WMRSASC; and student-initiated work will be invited and asked to represent the voice of the child.</i></p>
Research Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends and statistics relating to peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire; • Statutory guidance – child protection policies in schools; and • Peer on peer abuse policies for schools.
Potential Visits	
Publicity Requirements	Following the conclusion of the spotlight review, report back to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

Outline Timetable:	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	Committee meeting – 16 September 2019
Spotlight Review	Autumn 2019

Present final report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	25 November 2019 or 20 January 2020
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Spotlight review members – All Members of children and young people scrutiny committee	
Chair	Councillor Carole Gandy
Support Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All members of the children and young people scrutiny committee - Councillor Peter Jinman - Councillor Jeremy Milln - Councillor Christy Bolderson
Co-optees	Education co-optees on children and young people scrutiny committee
Support Officers	J Coleman M Evans

Schedule of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recommendations made and actions in response

Meeting	item	Recommendations	Action	Status
15 July 2019	Corporate Parenting Annual Update – 2018/2019	<p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing note is provided concerning the multiagency panel relating to looked after children mental health services; • A briefing note is provided on the introduction of the care leavers covenant; • A response is provided to the question relating to the implications of the national funding changes on A Levels undertaken by looked after children; • A letter is sent to Herefordshire clinical commissioning group to seek clarification regarding the resourcing of the looked after children health team; and • A briefing note is provided on SHYPP referral levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulated on 3 October 2019 • Circulated on 3 October 2019 • Response circulated on 31 July 2019 • Letter sent to CCG on 31 July 2019 • Circulated on 3 October 2019 	Completed
	Fostering and adoption service annual reports 2018/19	<p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The achievements in the adoption annual report and the compliments in the fostering report are recognised and the officers working in those 		Completed

		<p>teams and carers of the council's looked after children are commended;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing note on proposals to increase the retention of foster carers and details of the training provided be provided; • A letter is sent to the Wye Valley Trust (WVT) to request details of the provision of occupational therapists in Herefordshire; and • A session is organised to look at case samples of how appropriate forms of care are determined for looked after children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carers training programme circulated on 31 July. • Letter sent to WVT on 31 July. • Included in safeguarding training delivered to members of the Council. 	
16 September 2019	Accommodation based support service for care leavers	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports the introduction of the accommodation based support service for care leavers; • supports an ongoing review of the service to determine its effectiveness and possible replication in future; and • requests that a site visit to the facility is arranged once completed. 	Approved at cabinet on 26 September	Completed
	Youth Justice Plan 2019-2020	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorses the Youth Justice Plan for presentation to full Council; and • Asks that an addendum is added to the report, in forthcoming years, providing up-to-date statistics. 	Approved at full Council on 11 October	Completed

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