

# Agenda

## Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 15 September 2020**

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Time: **1.00 pm**

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Place: **On line meeting only**

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Notes: Watch this meeting live on the Herefordshire Council YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/HerefordshireCouncil>.

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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 Graham Andrews  
Councillor Paul Andrews  
Councillor Kath Hey  
Councillor Phillip Howells  
Councillor Mike Jones

## Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive apologies for absence</p>	
2.	<p><b>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></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><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 28 July 2020.</p>	5 - 22
5.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 9 September.            Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i></p>	
6.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 9 September.            Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i></p>	
7.	<p><b>ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR CARE LEAVERS</b></p> <p>To conduct pre-decision scrutiny on developing proposals for a local contract framework for purchasing accommodation based services for care leavers and other vulnerable young people ahead of a key decision in 2020.</p>	23 - 34
8.	<p><b>REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020/2021</b></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.</p>	35 - 118
9.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW</b></p> <p>To review the attached work programme for 2020/21.</p>	119 - 148
10.	<p><b>REVIEW OF PEER ON PEER ABUSE CASES</b></p> <p>To provide the outcome of the review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer on peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub</p>	149 - 190

(MASH).

**11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

In the opinion of the Proper Officer, the following item will not be, or is likely not to be, open to the public and press at the time it is considered.

**RECOMMENDATION:** that under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act, as indicated below and it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**2 Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.**

**12. PEER ON PEER ABUSE REPORT - APPENDIX 2 - EXEMPT - PRIVATE APPENDIX - HISTORIC CASES OF PEER ON PEER ABUSE SUMMARY OF DATA**

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the children and young people scrutiny committee will be held on 1 December 2020.

## Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Online meeting only on Tuesday 28 July 2020 at 1.00 pm

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

**Councillors:** Graham Andrews, Paul Andrews, Kath Hey, Phillip Howells and Mike Jones.

**Co-optees:** Mr James and Mr Pratley.

**Officers:** Director for children and families, Democratic services manager, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills

### 57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

### 58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 59. MINUTES

The committee considered the minutes of the previous meeting on 2 June and the addition of wording to the record of the public questions under paragraph 52. It was agreed that the following wording was added to the minutes:

*The committee was advised that no supplementary question had been received. It is right to acknowledge that the public questioner had indicated a desire to ask a supplementary question. However a supplementary question had not arrived at the time when supplementary questions were considered by the committee because of the late acceptance of the question.*

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 2 June are agreed as a correct record, subject to the addition of the wording above, and are signed by the Chairperson.**

The Chairperson updated the committee on the business for the meeting and apologised that the report concerning the review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse cases had been delayed from the current meeting. It had been requested that the report was brought to the current meeting however due to the involvement of officers in the COVID-19 response and the Leader's desire to ensure content and supporting information in the report was adequate it had not been possible. The circumstances were regrettable but it was explained that the review had been commissioned by the Leader and not by the scrutiny committee; the decision over the timing of the consideration of the report by scrutiny and its publication of the report lay with the Leader. Assurance had been

provided that the report would be available for consideration at the September meeting of the committee and there was a determination that it would not be delayed again.

The Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills confirmed that the report was being finalised and would be ready for the September meeting and advice had been provided that the report should be considered at that meeting.

## **60. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 15 - 18)**

A copy of the public questions received, response provided and the supplementary questions is attached at appendix 1.

## **61. SCHOOLS UPDATE**

The committee considered a report by the Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills (ADEDS) providing an update on the operation of schools during the lockdown and their reopening. The ADEDS introduced the report and raised the points below:

- There was some doubt nationally about attendance and the report provided data concerning attendance at Herefordshire schools and the support in place for those not attending was also covered. The attendance data ended on 1 July but attendance increased throughout July and 24% attendance rates were reached across special, primary and secondary schools;
- Herefordshire had the highest level of attendance in the west midlands with 5,500 children attending towards the end of the term which reflects year groups that government asked to return. A lot of schools took the opportunity to attempt to bring all pupils back into school before the end of the school term.
- It was acknowledged that from the data there had been two-third of pupils who were not attending and support for those pupils came in a range of ways including online resources provided to schools including free software licenses. Some schools were already familiar with the online resources and there had been outstanding performance in some areas but use across the county had been variable.
- Some schools made home visits and undertook virtual contact via video conferencing, phone and social media.
- During the lockdown schools were having to constantly respond to updated and changing government guidance.
- Guidance had been issued to families as to how to support children at home but it was acknowledged that it would have been a challenge for parents and carers who were working from home
- Guidance had been issued to schools on the range of facilities for remote learning and the offer they could make available.
- As the lockdown endured it was acknowledged that support became more variable. As the lockdown could result in children not attending schools for up to 6 months arrangements would be strengthened for the start of the September term. There was the potential for non-attendance to persist into the new school year.
- Social work heads of services had been contacting schools regularly to support children with child protection issues.
- Significant work had been undertaken to keep key worker provision open in early years.
- The impact of the lockdown on pupils' mental health and the educational deficit was still emerging. The report provided the young minds survey which was a national survey but with a relatively small sample. The outcomes state that there

is a variable outcome and there may have been an adverse impact on children with special educational needs in particular during the lockdown. A local survey undertaken in Herefordshire and Worcestershire echoed the national findings. Both surveys had small samples and the methodology was open to challenge but there was anecdotal evidence concerning children who had enjoyed the online opportunity particular from disadvantaged backgrounds and with autism where they could work comfortably from home.

- On return to school in September it is likely that there will be a significant gap between children with special education needs and their peers. The education endowment foundation suggests up to a 50% gap and locally it has been suggested that it will be 30%. Plans were in place to offer further advice and support to schools when pupils return in September.
- The government had announced some initiatives, the detail of which is awaited, including a catch-up programme which would make tutors available and the council is intent on bidding for some of the support offered. It was also anticipated that there would be more help in terms of transport of getting youngsters to schools.
- Planning was taking place for a fully open return in September however advice was still being received including whether secondary school pupils should wear face coverings.
- Early Help had been very busy during lockdown with 500 – 600 contacts every week; these were followed up with about 50 visits.
- Some detail had been issued about what Ofsted would do next term and it was understood that they would make school visits but not write judgmental report.
- Schools were encouraged to adapt curriculums from September to accommodate some of the catch-up work. If it emerged that some pupils had regressed during the lockdown they may emphasise certain elements of the curriculum. The autumn term would focus on returning to learning and catching-up on numeracy and literacy whilst adjusting to any new national guidance.
- When national guidance was issued in the future which contained is an opt-in opportunity for additional support the council would apply and join programmes on offer.

During the debate the Committee made the following principal points:

- The survey carried out between Herefordshire and Worcestershire was commended and the number of Herefordshire parents who had contributed. The survey was undertaken early during the pandemic and it was queried whether the exercise would be repeated. It was recommended that the survey was repeated at a later stage in October/November once pupils had returned to school. *The ADEDS explained that it was likely that the survey would be repeated but it had been led by public health rather than education. The Director Children and Families (DCF) explained that an in depth survey from the Children and Young Peoples Partnership was planned in January to cover a number of matters around the lives of young people in Herefordshire. A key part of the survey would focus on wellbeing and mental health and it would contain reflections from children on their state of mind and an assessment of the support they were receiving.*
- It was queried whether private nurseries that were still closed continued to claim the nursery education grant and if the reasons were known why such establishments could not reopen or were unlikely to reopen. It was proposed that a briefing note was provided in November with detail of the number of nurseries that had reopened in September and how many had been able to remain open. *The ADEDS explained that he would need to investigate if the grant was still being claimed but in Herefordshire there were around 170 pre-school settings; during the early stages of lockdown the number that were open dropped significantly. Work was undertaken at that point to ensure that a*

*service remained in the county. A number of private nurseries furloughed staff and there is some uncertainty as to the number of children who will return in September. Some establishments were dependent on the continuation of the nursery grant to stay open but if there were insufficient numbers of children the business model may become unviable. Early years settings in schools were not affected as they were funded differently. Around 120 pre-school settings had reopened by the end of the term and they were intending to open as normal in September and to test their business model during the September and October period. Business planning seminars had been hosted for the establishments providing advice on how to manage the reopening.*

- There had been some inequality in experience of some young people particularly for children in homes where there were a number of siblings and a lack of access to computers. It was likely that there would be a gap in attainment evident in September and it was important that there was an update on national catch-up programme when details became available.
- Tribute was paid to work of schools and teachers over the period of the lockdown and the work of officers at the council in support of schools.
- The intention to extend the curriculum variety and offer by keeping the blended learning model was queried and what the role of the council was in working with schools to implement the model. *The ADEDS explained that academies could decide their own curriculum but must still pass through an Ofsted inspection and work towards the national testing system. Schools should have been looking at a broader curriculum over the previous 2/3 years following an assessment that there had been too great a focus on preparation for tests in maths and English. The council were part way through adapting the curriculum when the pandemic arrived. Blended learning would continue for some time, during the autumn term it was possible that there would be local school lockdowns. Some courses were not suitable for the blended learning approach, particularly post-16 courses and this needed to be discussed with the colleges. Colleges had been very good at blended learning as they had been prepared prior to the lockdown but in respect of those courses with a vocational element or apprenticeship the online model may not be appropriate. Licenses had been provided to establishments to provide access to resources online. There is a variation among schools with respect to the online models currently being used; the curriculum model was there not as consistent as it could be. Ofsted will be looking at it in the Autumn term; two Ofsted inspectors had been seconded to the council who were commissioned to do a Herefordshire online survey and found that schools were doing well. The choice of different software among schools meant there was a variation in the offer that some schools provided which needed to be looked at in greater detail in the autumn term. The DCF explained that all schools were expected to follow the government's advice on attendance and the expectation was that pupils would physically attend schools. There were some benefits to the blended curriculum but the national approach was that children should be enabled to attend school which the council was working towards for September. There was some national guidance for children of families that were shielding and work was ongoing with schools and public health to see how they could be supported but it was acknowledged that guidance and advice was changing.*
- The Chairman explained that a review of CAMHS was on the committee's work programme and was something that the committee wanted to look at before the pandemic due to the waiting list for referrals to the service. As a result of the pandemic it was anticipated that waiting times would increase. It was proposed that the item was brought forward on the committee's work programme after the annual meeting of Council. The committee noted that there was significant data around children's mental health and a focus was now required on what actions could result, as part of the review of CAMHS it was recommended there was also a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children. *The ADEDS welcomed the review which should include a review*



*of what elements had worked well and how it had been achieved. In particular there should be a focus on the work undertaken by the virtual school; the attendance of looked after children rose from 10% early in the lockdown to almost half as a result of the work of the virtual school.*

- The committee heard from the education co-optee from the Diocese of Hereford who explained that there were 78 church schools in the Diocese. Attendance had been very high during the lockdown. Tribute was paid to the head teachers and teachers for opening schools and coping with changing advice and guidance. In the report there was detail that attendance on a Friday tended to be low; some schools were choosing to close on a Friday and a greater consistency in the opening of schools would be welcomed. Where schools were struggling to open or to remain open there should be targeted support and an insistence that they open. *The ADEDS explained that the low attendance on a Friday had been a national issue and among explanations was that schools used the Friday as preparation for online work but a main reason was that schools were halving class sizes, especially in primary schools. It was acknowledged that needed to work in September to ensure that all children were back as soon as possible in all schools.*
- It was explained that the surveys were important but it was questioned what tangible actions would be put in place to respond to the outcomes? *The ADEDS explained that where young people had experienced adverse mental health impacts it was understood that there would be funding available, including for counselling support, to assist schools.*
- It was queried whether the number of laptops that had been issued had been sufficient, from where the request had emerged and whether additional support in the provision of broadband had been required. *The ADEDS explained that the number was provided by the Department for Education from a survey conducted in January each year. The council bid for and received the maximum number it was eligible for which was almost 400 laptops. About 20 dongles were allocated to provide a broadband service. Some laptops were received late but all were circulated before the end of term. The provision of the laptops was a greater challenge than access to broadband. Schools commented that a single laptop in a house with multiple children was a challenge. A number of schools reported struggling families who would have welcomed the equipment; some schools had been able to provide their own laptops. A survey has been conducted based on schools requests for more equipment and it would be reassessed in the autumn term.*

The cabinet member children and families explained that it was pleasing to hear the positive comments about the work of officers and schools during the lockdown. There was reference to the children's commissioner's report Teenagers Falling Through the Gaps and the local concern to this issue. Work was being undertaken with partners to identify where the gaps existed and identify actions to address those gaps; a statement would be released shortly which would outline how the council was addressing the concerns of the community. *The DCF explained that work was being undertaken to develop an approach to support children in education, training and employment. The approach would be the responsibility of the whole council, to address the economic situation where possible. Education training and employment figures for looked after children and care leavers had improved and was above national and statistical neighbours. It was however acknowledged that the challenges associated with employment opportunities and moving into adulthood would be significant for vulnerable children and children in general. There was a need to work closely with partners on the challenges.*

The debate continued as below:

- The variation of mental health services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the availability of services during the lockdown, as evidenced in the survey, was queried and what assessment could be drawn. It was important to understand the impact on mental health services during the lockdown and it was recommended that further work was undertaken on this area. *The ADEDS explained that under the lockdown face to face mental health services would have become virtual and people may have opted in or out of such new arrangements. It would be useful to look at the survey again to try to understand why people thought that the mental health offer had changed. The early help service was busy during the lockdown and with a potential second spike of infections the service was keen to maintain virtual visits. The DCF noted the responses to the survey which showed an absence of concern about the lack of exercise and lack of access to mental health support. There was a need to understand such feedback in light of the significant concern held by professionals around these issues. During the lockdown Herefordshire successfully bid for support for mental health teams in schools and a briefing note would be circulated to the committee. Further information had also been sent out to families regarding the support that could be provided through school nursing. A session had been held with Early Help and an outcome had been that there was felt to be a gap in emotional wellbeing support for primary aged children which could be a topic for scrutiny to look at; relevant agencies and professionals recognised that this was an area where further work was required. During the development of the children and young people plan it was acknowledged that there were low targets nationally for children to receive CAMHS support after diagnosis. The low target was a concern particularly in consideration of the potential effects of lockdown.*
- The committee heard from the parent governor co-optee from Westfield School who explained that there were between 10 – 15 % of pupils in school over the lockdown period due to the status of vulnerable children or children of key workers. There was a move to reintroduce pupils to school later in the term. It was felt that there had been a lack of guidance for special needs schools nationally given the additional per pupil staffing levels that are required and the education of non-verbal children and those with an ASD diagnosis. There was great gratitude for the efforts of the staff and leadership team throughout the lockdown who had made significant efforts to keep pupils in bubbles in school; although they had concerns regarding coping strategies with a lot of social care support withdrawn. The leadership team attempted to support staff mental health issues through internal/parental questionnaires and staff meetings. Children not attending were provided with relevant subject work and supported remotely with regular telephone contact where appropriate. Some children were supported with home visits once PPE had become available. The procedure for the new term in September would include: the possibility of alternate days and remote support; transport assistance would be sought from parents to avoid children travelling together; temperature checks would be undertaken on arrivals; and there would be a focus on maintaining bubbles. *The ADEDS explained that weekly telephone calls took place with head teachers of the three multi-disability special schools. There was concern around the lack of PPE in the initial phase of the lockdown. In September one special school will stagger the start in the first weeks back following consultation with parents and families.*
- The impact of the lockdown on the anxiety of pupils on the autistic spectrum was raised and special consideration would need to be given to how this could be managed in schools. There was also concern for the support available for children who had experienced domestic abuse, family breakdowns and increasing financial pressure. Potentially a lot of young people could be falling through the gaps.

The Chairperson proposed and Councillor Paul Andrews seconded the recommendations below which were approved unanimously.

## **RESOLVED – That:**

- **The committee recommends that a further survey is undertaken concerning children’s mental health and schooling arrangements during the pandemic;**
- **A briefing note is circulated providing details of the number of private nurseries that have opened in September 2020 and stayed open in October and November;**
- **An update is provided regarding the national catch-up programme;**
- **The work on children’s mental health is prioritised by the committee and includes a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children;**
- **Further detailed examination of the outcomes of the survey is undertaken to determine how the provision and effectiveness of mental health services were impacted during the lockdown;**
- **An update is provided regarding the attendance rates after the return to school in September.**

## **62. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2020-2023**

The committee considered a report from the Head of Looked After Children (HLAC) to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 – 2023, the Care Leavers Covenant and the Fostering and Adoption annual reports. The report was introduced by the Head of Looked After Children who outlined the following in her presentation to the meeting:

- The refreshed strategy would be taken to cabinet in September following the end of the previous strategy which had been felt to be a success
- The corporate parenting strategy had been developed with the corporate parenting panel and each of the priorities in the strategy was led by a panel member working alongside your voice matters.
- Young people were a part of developing the strategy
- The strategy has been reduced in size to focus on important elements and those which will make a difference to children and young people. It is a responsibility of all councillors and officers as well as partner agencies to deliver on the corporate parenting expectations as set out in legislation.
- The care leavers covenant is a new initiative and was contained in the DfE’s keep on caring policy to promote five key outcomes for care leavers. Herefordshire had been identified as a trailblazer local authority and therefore it was important that the council lead by example. Through the care leavers covenant the objective was to work with local businesses, agencies and the third sector to encourage a commitment to the care leavers covenants. Such local bodies would be approached to see what more they could do to support young people to establish themselves as young adults.
- The fostering and adoption annual reports detailed the achievements and areas for development and improvement for each of the services over last year and priorities for the current year. The adoption service was provided by Adoption Central England (ACE) which was a regional adoption agency (RAA) led by Warwickshire but with Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Coventry and Solihull. The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support explained that she was the chair of the ACE executive board and would represent strongly the interests of Herefordshire. Membership of the RAA had brought a number of benefits which had strengthened the adoption of children from the county. ACE provided skills and expertise in the recruitment of adopters who were then well supported and assisted the placement of children in a timely manner where adoption was the plan approved by the court. It was likely that evidence of good performance in this area could be brought to the committee shortly.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- The new format of the corporate parenting strategy was commended.
- The difficulty for care leavers to get jobs and training as a result of the pandemic was explained and it was behoven on all to help where possible. Partner organisations such as Halo, Hoople and Balfour Beatty should commit to the care leavers covenant, large contractors engaged by the council to undertake large infrastructure projects in Herefordshire should also commit.
- The 16+ champion was queried and when a member would be appointed to the role. *The cabinet member children and families explained that she understood that two volunteers had put themselves forward and that governance would be taking this forward shortly.*
- School performance at key stage 1 to key stage 4 was queried and the reasons why it appeared to be a low performance. *The HLAC explained that looked after children were a relatively small cohort within each year group and there could be great variation in educational outcomes for children. However this should not be used as an excuse and the data should be interrogated further.*
- The implications of the reduction of Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) providers was queried. *The HLAC explained that there had been a reduction during the year despite an objective to increase the number. There had been significant difficulty in attracting new carers to the scheme. The carers did tend to suffer from fatigue due to the intense support that was required. Some HIPSS carers had committed to providing permanency to children who had stepped down from residential placements to HIPSS which was viewed as success. This has however reduced the number of carers. Work to attract carers had been investigated and it had been agreed that a different approach would be undertaken. New carers would continue to be sought but also HIPSS placements would be offered; to allow existing, approved carers to offer a placement for a young person who was in a residential setting. A potential reason people were dissuaded from being a HIPSS carer was that there was a perception of a lack of choice concerning which child would be placed even though this was always subject to suitability matching. 16 children and young people had been identified that were currently in residential settings and would be suited to a fostering family. Carers who felt they would be capable of working with HIPSS would be engaged and spoken to regarding the children who had been identified for a step-down from residential settings and it would be possible to determine if any were a good match. The same allowance for HIPSS carers would be provided to foster carers providing a HIPSS placement. The same support package would also be provided which it was hoped would broaden the opportunities to step children down from residential placements.*
- It was noted that in the last plan there had been an intention to improve retention of foster carers by providing a better offer. It was understood that this should have been completed before the pandemic but was now not possible until the end of the year. *The HLAC explained that the retention of foster carers had been a priority for a number of years. A strategy had consisted of increasing investment in training and the financial support provided to carers. It was important that training of foster carers was interesting, diverse and adaptable and an investment of £11,000 had enabled the purchase of an online training package specifically for foster carers. This had resulted in an increase in training particularly of secondary carers in a household. It had been particularly important during the pandemic as the face to face training offer was paused; one outcome of the online training had been an increase in the amount of training being completed. Alongside the online training offer there was also work to develop more bespoke face to face training and how it can be delivered over conference call software. Preparation courses have continued to be delivered through such software during the pandemic with good feedback. The intention to*

*increase allowances for foster carers had been a significant piece of work and draft proposals were being finalised for approval in the next couple of months by Cabinet. Consultation was still required with foster carers. Foster carers were paid in two separate parts, an age related allowance was paid, the minimum level of which was set by the DfE, and a fee was paid at a level which was commensurate with the skill and experience of the foster carer in line with common practice. The fee element of the council's offer had fallen behind what some other local authorities were paying which needed addressing through the Cabinet decision.*

- *It was noted that the number of sleepover carers had reduced. The HLAC confirmed that five carers had been lost from the scheme over the last year for a number of reasons including some carers moving into the main fostering pool and others who decided it was not right for them. The scheme had suffered due to the lack of a coordinator in post for much of the last financial year. The post has now been filled and it is a priority to promote the scheme and recruit new carers. Communication had been impacted by a turnover of staff in the fostering service; relationships were important to foster carers and having a consistent social worker was desirable. Due to the staffing turnover there had been a reallocation of foster carers to social workers some of whom have had several changes. Agency workers had been used for a time and several changes of worker has impacted upon communication and consistency with some foster carers. The team was fully staffed again with permanent staff members and where new foster carers were recruited they were allocated a permanent member of staff and a family support worker*
- *It was noted that as a result of the pandemic the service had managed to clear the backlog of life story books and it was hoped that there would not be such a backlog in future. The HLAC confirmed that there had been a significant backlog which had been almost cleared and almost no children awaiting adoption were waiting for the work; all children who had been adopted had a completed life story book. It was important that the position was not lost and a system was in place to track children when the work was completed and ensure a backlog did not emerge again. It also formed part of performance reporting for the service.*
- *It was noted that there was an intention to develop a mental health pathway for children in care and their carers and surprise was expressed that one was not already in existence. This was felt to combine with the recommendation of the committee in respect of mental health.*
- *The penultimate bullet point of the care leavers covenant was not felt to be clear and it was requested that it was reworded. The HLAC would look at the wording and confirmed that it was attempting to convey that the council uses its commissioning and procurement opportunities to incorporate improvement and added value for looked after children and care leavers within its contacts. A meeting had been undertaken with the Head of Procurement to discuss how it could be implemented at the council. Part of the opportunities involved working with Balfour Beatty and Hoople to ensure there were employment opportunities. Other examples included getting good deals for care leavers on mobile phones or laptops as the council was procuring large supplies of such products.*
- *The councillors mentoring scheme for looked after children was queried as each councillor had something to offer to support young people. It was understood that looked after children wanted councillors to consider the impact their decisions had on them. The HLAC explained that it had been very difficult to match care leavers to a member. A new councillors offer had been developed at the previous meeting of the corporate parenting panel which would be shared over the summer. The new offer provides options for a councillor to select that they would be willing to undertake. Looked after children wanted to know that councillors were interested, they cared and they were doing what they could in their role to help support them. The DCF explained that it was important that*

*councillors considered in all their work how their actions could benefit looked after children.*

- *The role of the council and councillors to signpost looked after children to apprenticeship opportunities at local organisations was also raised. It was queried whether the council offered apprenticeship opportunities. The HLAC explained that there had been some apprenticeships for older looked after children and care leavers; in the last financial year there had been three. It was recognised that the young people needed a lot of support and work was required to determine how the service could work with them to support applications and ensure that they have the opportunity to do the job and be successful. The feedback and experience of staff members who had worked with care leavers was that they had underestimated the level of support that was required. Advance notice of apprenticeship notices were provided to the service to enable the 16+ team to talk to young people who were potentially suitable for the posts. Very few went on to apply for suitable posts therefore work was required to address the confidence and employability skills of care leavers.*
- *It was noted that the number of people now in suitable accommodation was an impressive increase over a four year period.*
- *The proportion of children coming into care against local and national trends was stark and the trajectory of the trend was observed as steeper than other areas. There had not been a discussion of why it was happening and if there was more that could be done to prevent children becoming looked after. The HLAC acknowledged that the number of children in care was higher than statistical neighbours which is the result of excess children coming into care and insufficient numbers leaving care. The council was addressing the issue and in the previous financial year the numbers of children coming into care had reduced. The council was more in line with statistical neighbours but there was more room for improvement. A new edge of care team had started work recently and there were some indicators to suggest that it was assisting the prevention of children coming into care. This was particularly the case for older children where domestic conflict had caused family breakdown and where such children were not best served in residential care, most likely out of county, away from family, friends and educational settings. More work was required around the numbers leaving care and it was acknowledged that the service had been too risk averse. An attitude had existed whereby conditions had to be perfect to allow a return to the family environment. There was a need to change this culture and accept that children belong in the family environment and unless it was very unsafe they should be with their families with support from the council. Those young people who were settled in care with foster carers would be supported to leave care through a special guardianship order (SGO) and there had been a number of successful applications. There were currently 36 applications in court for either SGO or discharge of care order due to children returning home to live with parents. The orders were likely to be granted and more applications would be made in the forthcoming months. The edge of care team were supporting children to return home and had started working with children and families. When proceedings were initiated officers were investigating whether children needed to stay in care or if there were family arrangements that could safely care for children if they were unable to return home. Plans for adoption were also pursued.*

*The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support provided an update on the actions undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to a whole service approach to prevent children becoming looked after:*

- *There was an updated procedure for the pre-birth approach which was devised in consultation with Health. There were a number of cases where women were pregnant and had previously had children removed. The policy*

*and approach to this cohort was not felt to be as good as it could be; the new approach ensured intervention at an earlier stage to work with, support and assess with an intention to keep the child with the mother and family where possible.*

- *The family support service had been reconfigured; nine of the family support workers who sat in court and CP section had been relocated to sit with the assessment service to enable support into families at the earliest opportunity. Child in Need work was now kept in the assessment service to assist intervention at the lowest level to help families achieve change. There had been investment in early help and family support team; from September there would be an Early Help hub working alongside the MASH to ensure cases where early help was required would be referred directly to the hub. The domestic abuse hub had just been updated and reviewed which was with the safeguarding partnership and was a multi-agency approach to intervening at an early stage with families with lower level incidences of domestic abuse. Three additional family workers had been added to the child protection court teams to ensure they could work with extended family members during proceedings to facilitate potential SGOs; currently at the end of proceedings children might get kinship carers but under reg 24 where they are classed as foster carers the service is required to return to court to apply for an SGO. Judge Plunkett has explained he would be content to make SGOs at the final hearing with evidence that child and carer had been prepared for the placement and a good support plan was in place for the special guardian. Initial permanence planning meetings were undertaken upon issuing and entering into proceedings to ensure family members could offer a permanent home to a child if the child cannot be maintained with the parent. At every looked after child review the question is asked whether the child could return to the home; the question had not been put frequently enough and being taken into care did not mean that a child should remain in care in the long term. Family circumstances change which might enable the child to return home. Significant work had been undertaken at all parts of the system to support the prevention of children coming into the care system or to facilitate children to leave care if safe. Therefore it was not just the Edge of Care/Home (ECHO) service working to reduce the number of looked after children but a whole system approach involving a number of other teams. MASH assessment, CP court and the Looked after service had received additional family support resources. ECHO was working with around 20 children; despite the service commencing during lockdown, this had not prevented work with a number of families to prevent admission to care or to enable children to return home.*
- *Priorities 4 and 5 in the corporate parenting strategy: to be physically and emotionally healthy; and enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities, were raised by the committee. It was noted that the priorities linked to the committees concerns regarding mental health. With respect to strategic partners identified under priority 5 there was no mention of market towns and the organisations locally who could provide support and opportunities to looked after children. The range of organisations currently in the document appeared Hereford-centric and it was queried if reference to market towns and local communities across Herefordshire could be incorporated. It was felt that mention of the youth games which took place in Herefordshire each year should also be included in priority 5. The HLAC explained that the priorities interlinked and the involvement of organisations in all local communities to provide opportunities for looked after children was sought. It was important that foster carers were aware of the opportunities that existed for looked after children such as the youth games.*

- The distribution of looked after children across the county was queried and whether they were concentrated in Hereford. *The HLAC confirmed that looked after children lived across the county with fostering families.*

The cabinet member children and families explained that the intention was for all looked after children to have positive outcomes and to have the same opportunities as children across the county. It must also be recognised that they had difficult and traumatic backgrounds in many instances which demonstrated the importance of engaging and listening to looked after children and respond to their comments, interests and feedback. The changing nature of the support provided by councillors was as a result of listening to looked after children. The role councillors could play in signposting to opportunities for work experience or apprenticeship would be very important. An element of the feedback received from looked after children was a desire to contribute to and be respected by their local communities. In the past it was felt that looked after children were not given the same opportunities as children within their own families and the council was seeking to address and resolve this issue and remove restrictions to such opportunities. It was important to work with partners who were on the corporate parenting board including health and education to explore the opportunities they could offer. To have the wellbeing and opportunities for looked after children in mind when undertaking council business or taking decisions was now fundamental to the work of the council.

The Chairperson proposed and Councillor Graham Andrews seconded the recommendations below which were approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED - That:**

- **The wording of the bullet point in the care leavers covenant concerning commissioning and procurement required clarification;**
- **A role for members of the council in respect of assisting looked after children could include the signposting of children in care and care leavers to local organisations offering work experience and apprenticeship opportunities; and**
- **Priority 5 of the corporate parenting strategy should include mention of market towns, the involvement of local communities and the youth games.**

**63. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The committee received and noted the work programme attached to the agenda with an addition agreed at the current meeting to reflect the prioritisation of the children's mental health review.

The committee received an update from Councillor Diana Toynbee on her visit to the supported accommodation in Widemarsh Street for young adults with complex need.

The clarification contained in the Chairperson's response to the supplementary question concerning peer on peer abuse cases and the minutes of the previous meeting was raised. The committee voted to confirm that the clarification provided by the Chairperson, concerning the use of the terms substantiated and unsubstantiated, would be appended to the minutes of the current meeting of the committee; 28 July 2020.

**RESOLVED – That:**

- **The 2020/21 work programme of the committee is agreed subject to a change to reflect the prioritisation of the review of CAMHS and children's mental health; and**



- **The clarification provided by the Chairperson concerning the use of the terms substantiated and unsubstantiated cases to be appended to the minutes of the current meeting of the committee; 28 July 2020.**

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

**Chairperson**



**Supplement – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 28 July 2020**

**Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mrs Steel, Hereford	<p>Para 53 of the Minutes records a request from the Chair of the Committee that in the next version of the report into historic cases of peer on peer sexual abuse, the committee is told whether cases involved rape or sexual assault and whether cases were substantiated or not.</p> <p>Why were these requests made?</p>	Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p><b>Response:</b> In scrutinising the response of the Council to historic cases it is felt important to establish if there was a consistency of advice provided and actions taken irrespective of whether the cases were substantiated or unsubstantiated and whether they were rape or sexual assault.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question:</b></p> <p>My original question asked “Why” the request was made by the Chair of the Committee that in the revised report into historic cases of peer on peer abuse, the report should distinguish between substantiated and not substantiated cases, and between rape and sexual assault cases.</p> <p>The response given to my question does not attempt an explanation as to why the requests were made.</p> <p>I assume that the Chair of the Committee who made the requests now recognises how deeply inappropriate and unhelpful it was to ask for that information to be included in a report about safeguarding children after disclosures of sexual assault, given how many victims of all ages choose, for very good reasons, not to report an assault to the police or pursue a case through the criminal courts.</p> <p>Can the Monitoring Officer’s team now assure concerned members of the public that a post-meeting note can be inserted into the minutes in Para 53 in order to ensure that anyone who subsequently reads those minutes is reassured that the request that was made at the last meeting has been recognised by this Council as deeply inappropriate and that the request has been formally withdrawn or rejected?</p>			
<p><b>Response to supplementary question:</b></p> <p><u>Chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee:</u></p> <p>It was important to distinguish between substantiated and not substantiated cases of rape and sexual assault when assessing the response of schools and the local authority to cases on peer on peer abuse. It is not correct for the local authority or for schools (having received guidance from the local authority) to treat substantiated cases of peer on peer abuse (i.e. case which have supporting evidence whether that be by a witness account, violence on the part of the perpetrator or the accused admitting to the offence) any differently with regards to the guidance to a case where the event has taken place and the evidence is not available and where it is one persons word against another, as happens in a number of peer on peer abuse cases. With regards to those who choose not to report to the police or pursue a case through the courts or where police are likely to say there is insufficient evidence it is considered</p>			

unsubstantiated. However it should be addressed in the same manner by the school and local authority in accordance with the guidelines. Similarly where a case in which the victim does not want a case to be taken forward as a legal case that case will have been brought to the attention of the school who will have reported it to the Multi-Agency safeguarding Hub who should provide the same guidance to the school and treat the case in the same manner.

The use of the terms substantiated and unsubstantiated refers to all cases of peer on peer abuse and whether those are cases that go through the legal process, cases where someone chooses not to take the case forward, cases where the police choose not to pursue the case, cases where there is no supporting evidence. All cases should all be treated the same, the guidance should be the same, the schools should deal with them in the same way and it is important to ensure that the report that goes to the September meeting does differentiate to ensure that the committee can be certain that substantiated cases are not given preference or treated differently or as more important than unsubstantiated cases.

With respect to the question concerning a post-meeting note:

The committee voted to confirm that the clarification provided by the Chairperson, concerning the use of the terms substantiated and unsubstantiated, would be appended to the minutes of the current meeting of the committee; 28 July 2020.

PQ 2	Ms Shore, Hereford	<p>At the last meeting, the written answer to the public question was supplied too late for a supplementary question to be submitted.</p> <p>The question concerned the failure to learn lessons about the handling of peer-on-peer sexual assault disclosures. The answer was concerning: firstly it quotes two projects which focus on prevention rather than dealing with disclosures. Secondly, the answer stated that the Council "did brief chairs of governors and schools in the May 2017 briefing on peer on peer abuse including reflecting on learning and continued to do so in regular briefings thereafter"</p> <p>Given that in November 2019 the Monitoring Officer identified that Chris Baird's understanding of the guidance on safeguarding in peer-on-peer assault cases was flawed in two material respects, how much confidence does the committee have in the quality of the briefings given to schools before November 2019?</p>	Cabinet Member Children and Families / Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
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**Response:**

Cabinet Member Children and Families response:

I regret that the written answer was sent too late for the supplementary question to be submitted.

Your first point was that the briefings focussed solely on prevention rather than dealing with disclosures. I can confirm however that the various briefings and shared resources over time have included details on dealing with disclosures appropriately. This effort was supported by expert sessions at conferences and corroborated by an Ofsted visit in December 2019.

I have been provided with the answers to questions which the monitoring officer advised Cabinet of in November last year.

One of the questions the monitoring officer considered related to a query arising from an email sent by the Director. The monitoring officer found that a paragraph in the email sent by the Director could have been better drafted. It does not say that the Directors understanding was flawed.

An independent review by Ofsted which confirmed the quality of the work being done and the fact that many briefings (in particular a full conference day in November 2019) were conducted by national experts would support our view that we do have confidence in the objectivity and content of the briefings given to schools. For example, several schools presented their experience at the Spotlight review which were well received. I am also happy to share the content of the conference which reassures that the quality and impact of the training sessions and briefings were strong. Please find below a link to the spotlight review papers:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1087&MId=7561&Ver=4>,

I believe that the quality of the contributory sessions evidence here supports the view that the briefings are accurate and of high quality. I therefore have confidence in them.

Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee response:

In December 2019 the committee held a Peer on Peer Abuse Spotlight Review to which a significant number of teachers attended and provided us with a presentation on the process they had adopted when dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse cases. Those teachers present were of the view that following National Guidelines produced in Dec 17 they were able, with the support of the Local Authority to deal with such cases whilst recognising that prior to Dec 17 this had been more challenging. They did however feel that the National Advice concerning the separation of victim and alleged perpetrator when both remain at the same school following an incident was still unclear.

The committee was reassured that following the National Guidance produced in Dec 17 that schools were receiving adequate support and briefing from the LA but took on board the teachers concerns raised about the clarity of some of the guidance. The Scrutiny Committee wrote to the DfE in April 2020 requesting that they review the information provided to schools with regard to the separation of the victim and alleged perpetrator when both remain at the same school. A response was received and conveyed to the committee in June 2020.

**Supplementary question:**

The long answer to my question intentionally or unintentionally misrepresents my question and fails to address the core point. The core point is the concern that, as a result of flawed advice in the past, victims of sexual assault continued to be in school with their abuser.

We do not know whether there are children who are still in this situation today. This was supposed to be the focus of the urgent review Everything in the answer which refers to actions post November 2019 is irrelevant and only serves to obscure the core concern.

Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People accept:

- i) That the review commissioned by David Hitchiner into the safety and wellbeing of victims of peer on peer sexual assault prior to November 2019 was necessary and urgent to ensure children's safety
- ii) That an eight month delay into an urgent safeguarding review is not acceptable.

With the results of the review still outstanding, when will the cabinet member be able to guarantee there are no children in this position now?

**Response to supplementary question:**

Cabinet member for children and families:

The delay to the review was very unfortunate and was regretted. It had been unavoidable and there had been a desire to ensure that the report was correct to address all aspects of the issue with a number of views incorporated into the report. It is a valuable report and it will be helpful to assist the council to ensure that children are safe and looked after.

There was confidence in the practices currently in place, the advice provided to schools and the ongoing training and conferences meant that every school knows how it should be responding and supporting children who have suffered peer on peer abuse. It is not possible to guarantee that these practices are followed-through but we are absolutely certain that every school is aware of how the guidance is implemented.

We all care for the safety and wellbeing of children and we are all concerned when things go wrong and we all want to do our best for children.

Assistant director education, development and skills

I believe that the schools are now fully aware of what is required in terms of their responsibilities with regards to children not having contact with their abuser or alleged abuser. They do now know what actions should be taken and they have had a range of training and guidance that has been issued for some time now in conferences and briefings. As a consequence I believe that children are safe and protected in schools but ask if people have concerns that they contact me. I am also confident that the range of guidance and advice that has been issued is of a reasonable quality as it has been led by national experts in the field and it does take account of previous advice and guidance which has been incorporated into the most recent advice and support to schools.



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 September 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Supported accommodation for care leavers – Development of a local framework</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Head of Community Commissioning</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose and summary

To enable the committee to fulfil its function to review and scrutinise children's social care including safeguarding and to make reports and recommendations on these matters.

The committee agreed as part of its work programme that draft proposals concerning an accommodation and support procurement framework for care leavers and vulnerable young people would be presented for preview ahead of a decision by cabinet. The committee is exercising pre-decision call in of the decision. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the proposed new procurement framework and, in addition to their role on the scrutiny committee, also allows members to fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parents in support of the provision of facilities and services for looked after children and care leavers.

The key decision to be sought from cabinet will be to approve the procurement and launch of a new local framework for the arranging and purchase of support and accommodation for care leavers and some looked after children who are 16+. The services purchased via the framework will support young people to develop their skills, resilience, opportunities for training and employment, engagement with relevant services and participation in their communities, to enable them to move towards independent living. Procurement frameworks establish an agreed cohort of providers which can compete for the awarding of individual contracts or placements, often via a mini-competition. Inclusion on a framework is usually based upon having satisfied certain criteria in relation to service availability, quality and cost.

The proposed new framework will complement newly commissioned accommodation and support services for care leavers and vulnerable young people and support the vision and principles of the looked after children and complex needs placement sufficiency strategy 2019-2024. The placements will be led by the needs of the young people to achieve positive outcomes. The local framework will support the strategy to address the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of appropriate placement provision as well as value for money.

The framework will focus on providers able to offer services in Herefordshire to support young people's continued contact with social and family networks and community participation. Design and operation of the framework will seek to balance continuity of established local providers with regular refreshment with new providers able to join the local market. There are some issues still to be resolved in designing the framework, including;

- Maintaining and improving standards of care and support in an unregulated market
- The most effective ways of ensuring fair pricing whilst attracting providers to operate in Herefordshire.
- How physical accommodation is sourced and funded in relation to the framework.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **the committee reviews the proposals for an accommodation and support framework for care leavers and looked after children over 16 and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive, which may enhance the effectiveness of the plans.**

## Alternative options

1. Not to establish a procurement framework for accommodation and support for care leavers and looked after children over 16. This option is not recommended as the council would not then have an opportunity to exert any control over the price and quality of accommodation or support placements for care leavers or looked after children (LAC) over 16. It would limit opportunities to promote and develop a more effective local accommodation and support market and would continue reliance on the regional framework which has not been effective for Herefordshire.
2. To establish a framework only for support of young people and rely on the council sourcing accommodation separately. This option is not recommended as although this approach would be preferred in the medium term, there is not sufficient availability of accommodation presently to enable a support only framework to be viable.



## Key considerations

3. The children and young people scrutiny committee agreed as part of its work programme to conduct pre-decision call-in on the draft decision relating to accommodation based service for care leavers. The decision concerns provision for care leavers and the committee is conducting pre-decision scrutiny to fulfil its function to scrutinise matters relating to children's social care including safeguarding. Pre-decision scrutiny of the decision is also in accordance with members' responsibilities as corporate parents to ensure the council's looked after children receive care that is suitable to their needs. The committee will examine the issues around the proposal and make recommendations to the cabinet member children and families on the proposed service for consideration during the finalisation of the decision.
4. The council has a duty to ensure that care leavers are safely and appropriately accommodated. There are currently limited options for accommodating care leavers and 16 and 17 year old looked after children with a variety of different levels of need in Herefordshire. There is a reliance on out of county specialist placements, spot purchased at significant cost, and of varying quality. There are also gaps in support for young people at risk of homelessness. Young people require safe and affordable accommodation, aligned to support towards increased independence, underpinned by realistic opportunities for learning and work.
5. On average Herefordshire has had 117 entrants to the looked after system each year since 2015. 18% of new entrants were aged 16/17. The majority of young people's needs include being accommodated locally. However, due to service capacity pressures, in sourcing local accommodation and support, this is not always possible. There were 38 active out of county placements for children aged 16-17 and care leavers on 1 July 2020, at significant cost to this council.
6. An enhanced local offer of appropriate accommodation will allow vulnerable young people to remain close to their local connections and ensure they receive the support and opportunities to successfully transition into adulthood, whilst providing a cost effective service in county.
7. The current data on young people's accommodation and support needs reflects a recent trend of the decline in numbers of young people with moderate support needs. The data for the next two years shows a focus on those with light touch or complex/very complex support needs. The increased trend in demand among those with complex or very complex needs is reflected nationally by other authorities and providers of supported accommodation. The Department of Education published national data for care leavers in 2018/19 that indicated that 6% of those aged 19 to 21 years were in unsuitable accommodation with 360 homeless or of no fixed abode and 200 residing in emergency or bed and breakfast accommodation. Nationally 20% of all newly looked after children were 16 to 17 year olds, up from 18% in the previous year. This includes those accommodated under Section 20 due to homelessness and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).
8. Analysis work has been undertaken in conjunction with Children's Services colleagues to identify what the accommodation and support needs of the looked after population are likely to be when they become care leavers (turn 18). 48 current children looked after are identified as reaching 18 in the period from Spring 2020 to February 2022. Their likely accommodation needs are summarised here:

Type of need	Profile	Numbers	Anticipated accommodation demand
Light touch	Young person may need help to find appropriate accommodation and floating/light touch support tapering off over time.	27	Very Likely = 0 Likely = 3 Possibly = 3 Not very likely = 21
Moderate	Care leavers who present as homeless requiring accommodation and support to become independent. Support typically involves open door accommodation in a managed environment to transition to independence.	8	Very Likely = 0 Likely = 1 Possibly = 6 Not very likely = 1
Complex	Young people with chaotic or high risk behaviours. Substance misuse, undiagnosed or untreated mental health needs, antisocial behaviour, offending and vulnerability to criminal or sexual exploitation.	3	Very Likely = 0 Likely = 0 Possibly = 3 Not very likely = 0
Very Complex	Presenting risk to themselves or others, escalating to self-harm, suicide risk and/or significant violence. May also have undiagnosed or untreated mental health need and history of offending	10	Very Likely = 2 Likely = 4 Possibly = 3 Not very likely = 1

9. The proposed new purchasing framework for accommodation and support is part of a wider re-shaping and development of the market for provision in this sector. A new accommodation based support service for care leavers with complex needs has been established in a city centre building acquired for the purpose by the council in 2019. Redesigned services for vulnerable young people including mediation, outreach and accommodation are being commissioned to launch in February 2021. Whilst further strategic commissioning of new services for young people will follow, some reliance on spot-purchasing individual placements will continue for some years.
10. The council currently uses a specialist regional framework to try to purchase accommodation and support for care leavers and looked after young people over 16.

Very few providers on that framework have existing services or accommodation available in Herefordshire. The framework typically involves specialist providers of support offering to source accommodation which is priced very commercially and with no resort to Housing Benefit income for councils. Network providers are generally commercial companies ineligible as landlords for housing benefit for supported housing. Providers then charge for support based on hourly rates, typically in excess of £24 per hour.

11. The use of the regional framework generally does not yield any local service offer, leaving the council with a choice of placing someone outside the county or approaching the very small number of local providers. Where more than one provider or service is available locally a mini-competition can be run, but this is undertaken without any parameters or controls for price or quality. Overnight or accommodation services for care leavers are not regulated by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission or any other regime. The council has been developing proposals for establishing comprehensive quality standards for unregulated services, including accommodation and support for care leavers. A new local purchasing framework would provide impetus and focus for this standards initiative. This broad issue of standards is indirectly linked to the national concern focused on placing children under 16 in unregulated services. A government consultation on unregulated provision is considering proposals including national quality standards and expanded powers for Ofsted.
12. A small number of new commercial support providers have been launched within Herefordshire in the last two years and at least one substantial voluntary sector provider based elsewhere has established itself locally. Given the potential interest also of some registered housing providers and national children's charities, there does seem to be the beginnings of a local market for accommodation and support, sufficient for a local framework to offer potential. In parallel, the local market and existing use of frameworks for supported living of people with adult social care needs is being reviewed and there may be some connections between the two sectors which could be considered. However, the composition and relative maturity of the two markets are very significantly different. Therefore, it will be appropriate to pilot and consolidate the proposed framework for vulnerable young people first before contemplating a wider approach.
13. The proposed framework would enable providers to apply under one or more of three categories; accommodation and support, support only or accommodation only. Providers would have to demonstrate that they had capacity to deliver services locally at fairly short notice and satisfy the council's standards for quality, health and safety, safeguarding and other requirements. Success for a provider in a mini-competition would result in award of a specific contract to purchase an individual service or placement, using a contract format standard to the framework.
14. Measures to control price in purchasing through the framework would include;
  - Separating costs of accommodation from those of support and linking accommodation costs to the local housing allowance (LHA) rate for the relevant property type and size.
  - Statement of prices on application to join the framework and transparent pricing during mini-competitions.

Further measures could also include price banding, based on different levels of support need. Whilst banding is deployed as a price control tool in this and other sectors, it can be complicated to administer and is not assured to yield savings. Ceilings or caps on support charges offer tangible disincentives to providers and are likely to be effective only in well established frameworks with multiple providers active and competing.

15. After the initial procurement of the providers to join the framework, it would be closed to new applicants for up to a year to incentivise providers but open for a period each year to enable the ranks of providers to be refreshed with new joiners. Any providers not bidding and responding to mini-competitions consistently would be excluded, to promote a dynamic and effective framework. The operation of the framework would be reviewed every six months to monitor its effectiveness and challenges.
16. It will need to be established what the minimum number of active providers on the framework required is for its success. The administrative and procurement processes supporting operation of the framework require to be modelled in more detail to clarify that it is practicable and viable and to determine in which service/s its management and oversight should be located.
17. It is considered that a framework for purchasing support only for vulnerable young people would be much easier to operate and facilitate greater savings. Meanwhile, if the council was able to source all accommodation required either through its own acquisitions or development and by working with housing providers it seems likely that the quality of accommodation would be increased. However, this is likely to be realised only over a period of years as there is as yet no rolling programme of acquisitions and the logistics of housing providers sourcing and re-purposing properties on timescales aligned with placement decisions are not straight forward.
18. In proposing this framework the council will give due regard to all aspects of social value as defined in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. This will include any opportunities for social value to enhance the wider benefit to the community and look at incorporating key elements into the procurement process and management of placements, in line with the council's procurement and commissioning strategy. There should be opportunities for young people to volunteer as part of pathways to training and employment.
19. The framework will be procured via an open bidding process, which will require bidders to demonstrate their capacity and availability, their prices and compliance with quality standards and other requirements. Care leavers and other young people will be involved in the process. The design, governance and procurement timetable will be as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Engagement and development of proposals	September 2020
Finalising framework proposals	October 2020
Governance and Cabinet decision	November 2020
Complete governance and finalise specification and procurement process	December 2020
Framework procurement process	January 2021
Procurement evaluation and confirmation	February 2021

Confirmation of contract and placement arrangements and administrative processes	March 2021
Framework operational	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021

## Community impact

20. In accordance with the adopted code of governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining, the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make sure outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure our outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources whilst still enabling efficient and effective operations and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
21. The council's County Plan 2020/24 has set out the key ambitions for Herefordshire over the next 4 years, and how these will be achieved. These ambitions are: Environment – protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live. Community – strengthen communities to ensure that everyone lives well and safely together. Economy – support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources. The adoption of an accommodation and support framework will improve services which support the wellbeing and mental health of residents, with an emphasis on community engagement and participation.
22. The County Plan is committed to implementing a care leaver's covenant that demonstrates the council's commitment to supporting children who are moving on from care and to develop the market for care leaver accommodation and support through the commissioning of housing related support services that meet local needs. Establishing a framework will meet this commitment, with opportunities for young people to access local supported accommodation.
23. This decision will also contribute to the implementation of key priorities in the draft accommodation strategy for vulnerable people and addresses priorities set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy in relation to vulnerable young people and mental health needs.
24. The Children and Young Peoples Plan 2019 – 2023 identifies that targeted support is needed to make a difference, particularly to our most vulnerable, to enable them to thrive and make a successful transition to adulthood. The focus of the framework will be to develop independent living skills and connect young people to universal services and opportunities for education, training and employment, therefore reducing the numbers who are not economically active. Promoting independence will have a positive impact of both the individual and the wider community.
25. The proposed new framework will support the vision and principles of the looked after children and complex needs placement sufficiency strategy 2019-2024. The local framework will support the strategy to address the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of appropriate placement provision.
26. There will be an expectation that all accommodation provided through the framework will meet appropriate housing standards and accord with good health and safety practice.

## Equality duty

27. 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.
28. 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. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
29. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.
30. Establishing a local framework for accommodation and support for young people is expected over time to increase the availability and improve the quality of support and accommodation for people sharing protected characteristics, notably young people but also disabled people and potentially people from minority ethnic groups within the population.
31. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be developed around the proposed procurement framework. Overall, the proposal is not expected to have a detrimental effect on any groups of people with protected characteristics.

## Resource implications

32. There are no specific resources implications of this report as its purpose is to enable the Committee to review and advise on the proposals
33. There are no capital costs arising from this proposal. However, the development of a framework for young people's accommodation may underline the value for the council acquiring or developing property in the future for the provision of accommodation. This could lead to future proposals for investment in property to support this purpose, subject to the availability of capital funding.
34. The proposed framework has no direct implications for revenue expenditure, as it does not involve the commissioning or purchase of any new services. It is intended that once

established, a framework will enable the council to impose some increased control over prices paid for services and placements. Measures which will contribute to this are set out in paragraph 13 above, however, the use of such measures must be balanced with factors which attract providers to offer services locally and encourage competition.

- 35. Currently, there is continuing reliance on placements and accommodation services spot purchased from outside Herefordshire.

## Legal implications

- 36. All public procurements must be based on value for money, quality and effectiveness and follow the legal requirements as set out in the EU Public Sector Directive 2014 (“the Directive) and the Public Contract Regulations 2015(PCR 2015). The proposed procurement framework will need to comply with the requirements of the Directive and the PCR 2015.
- 37. It is anticipated that the framework for accommodation and support services will be procured by way of a competitive open tender process.

## Risk and Opportunity

- 38. The proposed procurement framework for accommodation and support service will create opportunities to improve the availability and potentially quality and value for money of services for young people. The risks arising from the proposal are essentially limited to how effective the framework is in achieving those improvements.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<p>The framework will create the opportunity to manage purchasing and placement decisions without working with a regional framework, which does not offer local services.</p> <p>The framework will offer an opportunity to ensure actual competition on price between providers and improve transparency as to what the council is paying for in purchasing support and accommodation.</p> <p>An effective framework will enable an increase in local accommodation and support for vulnerable young people and reduced reliance on placements outside Herefordshire.</p> <p>If the controls of cost or other factors incorporated in the framework are sufficient disincentive for providers, they will not join</p>	<p>Controls on cost in particular would be introduced gradually and evaluated to avoid disincentives and to optimise joiners of the framework.</p>

the framework. This would render it ineffective.

If there are insufficient providers on the framework to meet need or they do not bid for services via it, professionals will lose confidence in it and be obliged to purchase outside the framework, so rendering it ineffective.

Competition on price and separation of accommodation and support costs may be insufficient to reduce costs of placements significantly.

New entrants to the support and accommodation market may have limited resilience and capacity and could fail if expanding too rapidly.

The number and frequency of placements offered through the framework may be too few to provide economic incentive for some providers to join it.

The framework needs to be made attractive to providers by being seen as fair, economic and the only route to receiving placements. The framework will include a requirement for providers to respond with sufficient frequency to purchase opportunities or be removed from it.

Price banding based on levels of need can impose more control over cost but are complicated to operate. An incremental approach to the pricing and quality regimes is proposed to enable the market time to adjust to the framework and evaluate the impact of each measure.

This challenges exists in the market already. A framework provides a somewhat improved means of managing the risk and balancing the development of the market.

There is an option to pre-limit the number of providers on the framework at any time to help ensure sufficient opportunity for them.

39. Any risks will be appropriately identified and can be recorded within the Adults and Communities or Children and Families risk registers, where they will be escalated if required.

## Consultees

40. There has been extensive consultation with a wide range of providers in the markets for accommodation and support of young people, over a number of years. This included a market engagement exercise in 2019 over the proposal to establish a framework. This generated interest in the proposals, with a number of providers indicating they would seek to join a framework, once established. In addition there has been a recent procurement of a new service for care leavers with complex needs and a procurement of housing related support services for young people is underway currently. These will provide further learning to inform development of a framework.
41. The needs of care leavers are very much central to development of the proposal. There has been extensive engagement around accommodation needs over several years through the corporate parenting panel and one to one and group discussions were undertaken in 2019. There is regular engagement with looked after young people and care leavers around their accommodation and support needs.



42. Reporting to the children and young people scrutiny committee is part of the process of consulting in developing proposals for a framework. The views and advice of the committee will be taken into account in finalising the detailed proposals for the framework.
43. As the proposed framework is subject to a key decision by cabinet in November 2020, there will be a consultation in advance with council members via political group leaders. This will take place in September 2020.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background papers**

None





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and young people scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 September 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan 2020/2021</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Assistant Director for Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose

To review progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2020 / 2021 (appendix a) and Our priorities definitions (appendix b) produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent focused visits carried out in 2019.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

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

## Alternative options

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
 Andy Gill [Andy.Gill@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Gill@herefordshire.gov.uk)

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 the meeting on 2 June 2020 that provided an update on the progress against the overall improvement plan for Safeguarding and Family Support 2019 / 2020 that was 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 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.
3. The Ofsted focused visit of January 2019 looked at the local authority's arrangements for receiving referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of significant harm, children transferring to and from Early Help services, the effectiveness of child protection enquiries and the quality of assessments and interventions for children in need of help and protection. The conclusions were that from a very low base action taken by senior leaders had improved the overall stability of the social care workforce and that this had been achieved over a relatively short period of time. Plans for improvement were appropriately focused and there was a realistic view of quality of practice which was too variable and not yet good.
4. Revised performance management and quality assurance approaches were starting to show some early impact. The pace of progress was hampered by staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting to key management posts including the lead officer for quality assurance. There continued to be strong political and corporate support for children's services.
5. On 18 and 19 December 2019 Ofsted carried out a focused visit. The focus of the visit looked at our arrangements for children in need and children subject to a child protection plan. This included elements of contextual safeguarding, particularly peer on peer abuse. The conclusion regarding work in the Child Protection/ Court area of the organisation was that little progress had been made in improving the quality of practice, including the quality of management supervision and guidance, and timely recording. A major factor impacting on the ability to bring about improvement was difficulty to recruit experienced and skilled social workers into the service.
6. Ofsted published their report and further information was provided to all councillors. There were some positive elements to the feedback received from Ofsted. No children seen were identified at risk of significant harm and all were receiving interventions. There was positive recognition of the work of the children with disabilities team, the work on contextual safeguarding, peer on peer abuse, the stabilisation of the workforce through the recruitment and retention strategy and the planned investment. However, as the council recognises, little progress has been made in improving the quality of practice for child in need and child protection and the challenge in this area is heightened by difficulties in recruitment and staff turnover. Further work to address these issues is contained in the safeguarding improvement plan that is reviewed on a quarterly basis by children and young people's scrutiny committee.

7. Ofsted were provided with our “self – evaluation” and there was recognition that we know ourselves well, that the quality assurance framework provides appropriate and in depth knowledge, that there is senior leadership commitment to the service including resourcing and further plans for development. We review and update this on a quarterly basis (appendix c) to ensure that we continue to reflect and understand the progress we are making and the areas that require our attention.
8. Improvements continue to be made around performance information being provided to the services areas and a process has been developed to ensure that the information is received and reviewed and is being used across the division; this includes the monthly performance scorecard, (appendix d).
9. Early Help has developed considerably over the past two years since the introduction of Herefordshire’s Early Help Assessment (EHA) which replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There are 1324 EHAs (June 2020) compared with 500 CAFs in January 2018. Families with emerging or more complex needs below the threshold of requiring statutory intervention are identified and assessed using the EHA. The assessment is of the whole family and identifies their unmet needs then an outcome focused support plan is drawn up with the family to bring about sustainable change and leave the family stronger for the future. Each family has a ‘Key Worker’ who is the main link for the family and coordinates the agencies required to bring about the sustainable change.
10. The link between Early Help and the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) continues to develop and the plan to have an Early Help Hub (EHH) linked to MASH is moving forward. The EHH will be located beside MASH and take all level 1, 2 & 3 contacts and level 3 MARF’s (Multi-Agency Referral Form) thereby ensuring families are offered the ‘Right Support at the Right Time’ and releasing MASH to spend more time on investigating level 4 cases. Any cases deemed to be level 4 by the EHH will go directly into MASH and vice versa those cases on further investigation by MASH which don’t meet threshold will go to the EHH for signposting, advice and guidance or support through an EHA being offered as appropriate.
11. The June 2018 Ofsted inspection identified that the “MASH is responsive and ensures that good-quality information sharing results in strong decision-making”. The January 2019 Ofsted focused visit commented “effectiveness of responses in the MASH has been maintained and improved since the last inspection”.
12. Ofsted noted that a significant number of contacts are signposted away from children’s social care, which would indicate that too many children were being referred that did not reach threshold for intervention. 1938 contacts were received in Q1, 366, 18.9% contacts progressed to referral. This is below the target of 20%. Contact completed with 24 hours is 68.1%, this is an increase in contacts being completed within timescales but not at the target of 95%. Q1 has seen consistency in contacts converting to referrals. To ensure all contacts are completed within 24 hours the MASH Team now receive a report 3 times a day which provides them with a red, amber, green rating determined by timing.
13. The restrictions arising from Covid-19 meant that since the end of March, in line with many other local authorities, all looked after children reviews and child protection conferences have been conducted via video conferencing. Every effort has been made to ensure children and parents can be fully involved within Webex video based child protection conferences and looked after children reviews, with invitations sent via email and phone to participants who can access meetings by laptop, tablet and smart phones. Although there have been some technical issues due to broadband capacity, getting used to the

new technology has been relatively straightforward for many parents, children and partner agencies.

14. The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 1 there were 345 children in care which equates to 96 per 10,000, which is significantly higher than the national average (64 per 10,000) and that of statistical neighbours (53 per 10,000). The number of looked after children has been fairly stable over recent months but has reduced slightly during the quarter.
15. Care orders have been discharged for 7 children in the LAC teams in this quarter - 2 children were reunified and 5 children became subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) At the end of the quarter a further 31 applications are filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the LAC system.
16. There are 18 SGO applications and 7 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are 3 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications with legal services to be prepared for issue. 19 children have been formally long-term matched with more assessments completed ready for formal decisions in quarter 2.
17. The first "Signs of Safety" workshop took place in December 2019 and work is progressing towards implementation of Signs of Safety, an approach to underpin practice with a strengths based model working with families. This is an approach that will focus on building relationships with families, and identifying their strengths and support networks. To be successful, partners across the safeguarding and family support network need to adopt this approach to achieve a whole partnership change to working with children and families. The progress on this had been delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic; however the implementation is being taken forward through the arrangement of virtual workshops to progress this work during 2020/2021.
18. At the end of quarter 1 2020/21 a number of performance indicators for safeguarding and family support had shown some improvement. In particular, there has been an overall improvement in direction of travel in the percentage of visits being undertaken in quarter 1 with looked after children (96%) exceeding the target of 95%; and child protection visits (91%) just below target; child in need visits are at 88% at the end of quarter 4 but have improved from quarter 4 when they were at 82%.
19. Supervision within the quarter has also seen an improved outturn in quarter 1 with 83% of supervisions being completed in June 2020; compared to 82% in March 2020. Performance information is subject to weekly and monthly review by managers. Performance challenge sessions, are being held on a regular basis with the Heads of Service and their team managers commencing in May 2020; these provide an opportunity for managers to share their performance; and challenge and support improvement across the services.
20. There were 1938 contacts received in quarter 1 (2020/21); which is a decrease against the number of contacts received in quarter 4 (2019/20) which was 2017. The conversion rate of contacts to referrals has also seen a slight decrease from 21% in quarter 4 to 18.9% in quarter 1 (2020/21) Contacts managed in 24hrs increased in June to 80% (from 60% in May). Referrals managed in 24hrs increased to 78% (from 62% in May). The year to date % for contacts is 68% and for referrals is 70%.this is required under the 'Working Together' statutory guidance. As we move forward on improving the service provision, we have seen an increase in the number of assessments being completed in timescales; with the year to date 2020/21 outturn being 90% compared to 80% in 2019/20; this is against a target of 95%.

21. Recruitment continues to be supported by taking on an agency specifically tasked with recruiting social workers for Herefordshire and a bespoke microsite has been developed. Retention has been supported through a variety of enhancements, but filling vacant posts, keeping caseloads down and managing the work across the service remains a challenge. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) recruitment continues for newly qualified social workers and the ability to offer ASYEs good learning and development opportunities has been improved within the social work academy. A refreshed Workforce Strategy is under development to address recruitment and retention challenges.

## Community impact

22. 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 action completed and outcomes achieved.
23. The successful implementation of the improvement plan will continue to bring about further progress towards achieving the council's priorities of keeping young people safe and giving them a great start in life, contributing to Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2024 priorities. Furthermore, 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 within priority two of the health and wellbeing strategy.
24. The families and carers of vulnerable children and young people are experiencing different and improved approaches to service 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

25. 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 -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

26. 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 our improvement plan is implemented that we pay due regard to equality legislation.

27. The Safeguarding and Family 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 to meet their needs.

## **Resource implications**

28. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implication of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.
29. The implementation of the improvement plans required additional resources; these have been considered as part of the council's budget setting process; including what could be done in terms of prevention and edge of care services which are being implemented.

## **Legal implications**

30. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendation in this report.

## **Risk management**

31. 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 adversely 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.
32. The risks to successful delivery of the plan are:
  - a. If insufficient resource is identified 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

33. 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.
34. We have implemented 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 app enable young people to have their voices heard and to participate in decisions about their lives. This will 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 2020/21

Appendix B – Our Priority definitions 2020/21

Appendix C - Herefordshire Children’s Safeguarding Social Work Self - Assessment to end of quarter 1 2020/2021

Appendix D – Safeguarding and Family Support monthly scorecard June 2020

## Background papers

None identified



## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 (updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

### Executive Summary

The significant points that are highlighted are the top 5 elements that we are working towards; however, work continues across all the priorities as detailed in this improvement plan.

### What is going well? (reflection on the previous quarter)

*Includes:*

- Timeliness of visits to looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan
- Completion of supported accommodation building for care leavers
- Domestic Abuse Hub established within MASH
- Single practice approach (Signs of Safety) and supporting implementation plan
- Backlog of life story work for children we look after has been largely removed

### What are we worried about? (reflection on the previous quarter)

*Includes:*

- % of child protection enquiries (Section 47s) that are NFA
- Reducing numbers of children subject to a child protection plan
- High numbers of children looked after
- Are children who have gone missing getting support when they return home? Are risk management and safety plans being completed within appropriate timescales?
- Need to increase QA capacity to triangulate improvements in compliance with service quality and outcomes for children

### What actions are we going to take over the next quarter? (SMART actions to be progressed)

*Includes:*

1. Complete multi-disciplinary audit to properly understand reasons for high percentage of Section 47s where a decision of NFA is taken (look at “thresholds” and consistency of decision making); develop action plan. Joint priority with Safeguarding Partnership. **Lead Andy Gill (AD)**
2. Review reducing numbers of children subject to a child protection plan (building on previous work). **Lead Barbara Langstaffe (Head of Service).**
3. Complete initial review of children where family reunification should be assessed and actively explored as part of permanence planning. **Lead Gill Cox (Head of Service).**
4. Establish robust reporting system of return to home assessments and follow-up support for children who go missing. **Lead Barbara Langstaffe (Head of Service)**
5. Whilst re-advertising for a second QA Manager post, appoint interim support (3 days per week) and revise our recruitment strategy. **Lead Andy Gill (AD)**

## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

**Our vision for Children and Young People in Herefordshire as set out in the Children and Young People’s Plan for Herefordshire 2019 - 2024 is that we will work to ensure that: ‘The children and young people of Herefordshire have a great start in life and grow up healthy, happy and safe within supportive family environments’.**

Our aim is to set out within this safeguarding and family support improvement plan to provide the detail about what we are striving to achieve; what we will do to make a difference to children’s lives and how we ensure that our practice is consistently good!

**Over the coming year our key focus will be to complete QA activity to check (triangulate) performance measures against practice quality and most importantly outcomes for children (“Impact on Children”).**




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Our Priority areas	
1.	Getting it right for children and families first time
2.	Keeping Children and families together where possible; including a reduction in our looked after children numbers
3.	Record appropriate and full information to ensure that we meet the identified needs for children and families to support and achieve outcomes.
4.	Ensuring consistency of decision making for children and families
5.	Policy and practice that enables good quality social work for children and families
6.	A single practice approach that deliver and improves quality and outcome for children and families (Signs of Safety)
7.	The leadership of change to prioritise better quality and outcomes for children and families
8.	Sustainable workforce to provide continuity for children and families

Our Aims	Our priorities
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans	1, 4, 5
We will recruit, train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers	5, 6, 7, 8
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight , and decision making, informed by a robust Quality Assurance system	1, 3, 4, 5
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood	1, 2
We will aim to strengthen families and enable children to live within their family network through early help and edge of care offers	1, 2, 6, 7, 8




## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Priority 1</b>					
<b>Getting it right for children and families first time</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve priority</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Statutory Visits to children will be completed within timescales	Looked after child (LAC) visits will be completed to timescale. Target 95%  <b>LAC visits average Sept 2018 – March 2019 : 79%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 86%</b>	94%	Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers. Lead:-Gill Cox  Team Managers reviews the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Gill Cox		
<b>Impact on children</b>	Child in need (CIN) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%	88%	Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers. Lead:-Sue Rogers  Team Managers reviews the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Sue Rogers		
Children are seen to be safe and well, their voices heard, and they can develop a trusting relationship with their social worker	<b>CIN visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 53%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 70%</b>				
	Child protection (CP) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%  <b>CP visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 77%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 82%</b>	94%	Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers on a daily basis. Lead:-Cath Thomas  Team Managers reviews the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Cath Thomas.		

## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>All contacts received into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be assessed within 24 hours of receipt into MASH. We will strengthen MASH by adding an additional social worker to the establishment.</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Risk will be identified and no child will be left at risk of significant harm.</p>	<p>Target of 95% of contacts dealt within 24 hours of receipt into MASH will be met.</p> <p><b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 44.2%</b></p>	<p>24hr: 68.1%</p> <p>Early Help Hub to go live on 21/09/2020.</p>	<p>Additional Social Worker to be added to the establishment:- Lead-Sue Rogers</p> <p>A process of recording Domestic Abuse Notifications at level 1, 2 and 3 to be established and not recorded as a MASH contact (contact Bexley to learn from their experience): Lead-Sue Rogers</p> <p>Early Help Hub established to process Level 1, 2 and 3 Multi agency referral forms: Lead-Nicky Turvey</p>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Risk assessments are completed within timescales where risk of exploitation has been identified</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited</p>	<p>90% of exploitation risk assessments completed within 5 working days</p>	<p>Q1 2020/21 : 26%</p>	<p>Clear process of arranging Risk Management Meeting to be developed and implemented. Lead Barbara Langstaffe.</p> <p>Request by 03.07.20 to Heads of Service to remind managers and Social Workers of the timescales for completion of CE Assessments and undertaking of Risk Management Meeting. Lead Barb Langstaffe.</p>		 <b>This is the first quarter of reporting</b>
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Risk management meetings are held within prescribed timescales</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Dec 19: 79.63%</p> <p>Mar 20: 13%</p> <p>June 2020 : 21.2%</p>	<p>Any change of scheduled RMM dates to require authorisation from HoS Safeguarding and Review by completion of the Change of Meeting Request form.</p> <p>A refreshed MOSAIC process to inform the need of a risk Management Meeting and alert the CE coordinator so they</p>		


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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Impact on Children</b>	90% of risk management meetings held no more than 12 weekly for young people at moderate risk of exploitation	Dec 19: 100% Mar 20: 73% June 2020: 68.75%	have oversight from the start of the process. Lead: Barbara Langstaffe.		
Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Safety plans are developed in a timely manner during and following risk management meetings	90% of safety plans provided and distributed within 5 working days of a risk management meeting	78 Safety Plans from Risk management meetings were distributed from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020; however the number of safety plans that were distributed within 5 days = 3 plans  Outturn Q1 = 3.85%	<b>Development of terms of reference for direct work</b> including quality assurance of interventions for young people and families. This will include feedback on service delivery. Lead: Barbara Langstaffe  Safety plans completed within the meeting and distributed with the minutes. Business Support to be reminded by HoS to task minutes to be signed off by the Chair so distribution can take place within 5 working days. Lead: Barbara Langstaffe		<b>This is the first quarter of reporting</b>
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Children who are reported missing and are found receive an effective response and their views are heard	100% of young people not currently receiving a service are offered a return home interview within 24 hours of being found	Workflow has been amended as per instruction from HOS Safeguarding and Review and new reporting is being developed in Q2	Clear process and terms of reference to be implemented regarding notifications of missing children of Hereford children and children from other Local Authorities. Lead: Barbara Langstaffe  Identification of children who are placed within Herefordshire by other local authorities has been requested from Mosaic reporting on RHIs as these children are subject to the statutory duties of the placing local authority. While RHIs are completed for some of these children, establishing		

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			reciprocal or other terms for undertaking this work with other local authorities will be progressed. These children constitute between 25 – 30% of Return to home interviews are currently being undertaken but this is not reflected in the data. Work is being undertaken to ensure that the data is reported accurately.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	100% of children already receiving a service have return home interviews within 72 hours.	Workflow has been amended as per instruction from HOS Safeguarding and Review and new reporting has commenced and is being reviewed	Mosaic reporting adjustments required further amendments (not recognising non-working days) – this will go live by 17.08.20. Missing co-ordinator to confirm with Social Worker date of return home interview offered (if the social worker is to complete this) is within 3 working days. This confirmation to be applied to workflow by 17.08.20.		
48 Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.	Children placed by other local authorities within Herefordshire who go Missing multiple times to be subject of local multi-agency oversight.	June 2020 : 82%	Quarterly Missing Report has been re-started (last one was July 2018) and Qrt 1 will be distributed on 07.08.20. This identified 45% of Return Home Interviews were for children placed in Herefordshire by other local authorities. Discussion at SMT required as to use of resources, as no reciprocal arrangements in place with other local authorities. By 14.09.20. Children placed by other local authorities who go Missing three times or more (who will be subject to their own social work interventions) to be on agenda at multi-agency Prevent and Disrupt meetings with lead reporting from the police who hold Risk Management Plans from the placing authorities. From 10.09.20.		




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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>IRO is effective in ensuring care plans are appropriate to meet needs and do not drift</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p>	<p>90% of cases have at least 2 IRO oversights recorded within a 12 month period</p> <p><b>Outturn 2018/19 83%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20: 84%</b></p>	75%	<p>Data will be raised in supervision with IRO's to ensure oversight is recorded through individual case trackers. Lead: Louise Bath</p> <p>IRO case note completion reviewed monthly within supervision on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO. Weekly performance data identifies children with less than two oversights in twelve months or no oversights in the first four months of being Looked After and this raised with the IRO by the Principal IRO. Lead: Louise Bath</p>		↓
<p>Children's plans do not drift and their progress is overseen by their IRO. 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.</p>	<p>100% of formal disputes resolved within 20 working days</p>	<p>29 dispute resolutions were raised; covering Delegated Authority, completion of Care Plans and Pathway Plans for Looked after child reviews and the completion of Matching assessments; all were completed within timescale</p>	<p>Data will be raised in supervision with IRO's to ensure oversight is recorded through individual case trackers. Lead: Louise Bath</p> <p>Raising issues through the formal dispute resolution process to be discussed with IROs at Team Meeting on 01.07.20 to ensure IROs have a clear understanding of when the criteria for formal dispute resolution is met. Lead: Louise Bath</p>		↑
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We are investing in property for our care leavers and support services in the accommodation. We are submitting a further</p>	<p>Funding for placements will decrease. Young people will remain in Hereford.</p>	<p>Completion of building work delayed due to Covid-19. Project</p>	<p>Widemarsh St will now open w/c 13<sup>th</sup> July. Actions will be:</p>		↑





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business case for an expansion of local supported accommodation in Herefordshire		expected to commence end of June 2020	Plan and support young people to move into their new home – 16+ team manager		
<b>Impact on Children</b>			Meet with support provider, CCP, at least monthly to ensure good communication and effective working relationship – 16+ team manager Tender for contract for new supported housing project – Head of Community commissioning and resources		
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.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will establish clear transition pathways for vulnerable young people so they receive the services they require to assist them in adulthood.	There will be an increase in young people who receive services when entering into adulthood.	This is still to be progressed.	Young people leaving care will have an up to date Pathway plan which is reviewed at least every 6 months – 16+ team manager Stacie Lane  16+ team will be invited and contribute to the transitions panel so that there is effective planning between children's and adults social care – transitions team manager. Stacie Lane		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Young adults, vulnerable to risk will receive services to assist them transition into adulthood.					


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<b>Priority 2</b> <b>Keeping Children and families together where possible; including a reduction in our looked after children numbers</b>													
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	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.	Re referrals will decrease. Early help interventions will increase. LAC numbers will decrease. CP numbers will stabilise within a range of 135-155 (tbc)	There has been a decrease in re-referrals. End Q1: 21% Early help assessments have continued to be completed through lockdown which is positive as children and families continue to be identified, assessed and support put in place. Number of open assessments 1324 LAC numbers have decreased to 345. CP numbers have increased to 115.	Early help hub will be established by end of quarter 2 which will enable families to receive support at the earliest possible time. Early Help hub to go live 21/09/2020– Nicky Turvey  Complete thematic audit on re-referrals in July 2020 to identify actions to reduce the referrals. Actions will be implemented to timescale – Sue Rogers  Embed family support role in the assessment teams to work with families to provide support at the earliest point of statutory intervention – Sue Rogers	Green	    								
<b>Impact on Children</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Outturn 2018/19</th> <th>2019/20</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Re-referrals 31%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early Help 1088</td> <td>1295</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LAC 334</td> <td>352</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CP 111</td> <td>108</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Outturn 2018/19	2019/20			Re-referrals 31%	20%	Early Help 1088	1295	LAC 334	352	CP 111	108
Outturn 2018/19	2019/20												
Re-referrals 31%	20%												
Early Help 1088	1295												
LAC 334	352												
CP 111	108												
We will establish a culture of maintaining children within their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.													
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel								
We will developed an edge of care service, to enable children to reunify to and/or remain with their families	We will have a fully functioning edge of care service.	A full team of in-house ECHO workers has been appointed who have begun to	Multi-disciplinary posts (Women's Aid and We Are With You) will be recruited – Head of CP Court	Green									

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<b>Impact on Children</b>	Fewer children will enter the looked after system More children will leave the looked after system	transition to their new roles. Initial cases for reunification and stepped-down from care have been identified and direct work is beginning with them.  Covid19 has impacted commissioning timescales for externally provided elements of the service, but progress is being made.	Development of KPIs and performance framework for ECHO – Head of CP Court  Communications and engagement re ECHO practice model and pathway – Head of CP Court		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will ensure children receive early help swiftly where this is the appropriate service, by establishing an early help hub in MASH.	Increase in children receiving early help intervention.  <b>Outturn 2018/19 : 1088</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 1295</b>  Early Help will contact families and make a decision on at least 95% referrals within 72 hours	Early Help: June 2020: 1324          Nicky Turvey	The recruitment for the Early Help hub will be completed by the end of quarter 2 – Nicky Turvey Recruitment completed all new staff start on 07/09/20. The EHH to go live on 21/09/2020.  The Early Help Hub will be fully functional by the end of Quarter 3 – Nicky Turvey On track to start on 21/09/20. Following induction and training of the team.		

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			Early Help will contact families with consent and make a decision on at least 95% referrals within 72 hours – Nicky Turvey		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Maintain target of 20% contacts converting to referral.	Contacts to Referral (year to date %): Q1 : 19%	Maintain referral rate by having monthly performance meeting to review consistency of application of threshold – Sue Rogers		↓
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.	<b>Outturn 2018/2019: 17.4%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 21%</b>				
SG	Decrease in re-referrals	End Q1: 21%	Complete thematic audit on re-referrals in July 2020 to identify actions to reduce the referrals. Actions will be implemented to timescale – Sue Rogers		↔
<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 31%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 20%</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum)</b> <b>[Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Children who don't need to be looked after will be supported to return to their parents care or to be cared for outside of the looked after system via adoption or Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).	Number of looked after children leaving care will increase to that equivalent to or above statistical neighbours. Numbers of looked after children will decrease.	Care orders have been discharged for 7 children in the LAC teams in this quarter - 2 children were reunified and 5 children became subject to SGO's. At the end of the quarter a further 31 applications are filed either with court or with legal services to	Practice tools and standards shared with all staff involved in developing permanence plans – Cath Thomas  Training on foster to adopt and writing CPRs will be delivered by ACE to relevant social workers – Cath Thomas  Monthly review of children who may be able to be reunified or leave care via an SGO will continue to avoid drift – Gill Cox  Permanence plans submitted to the second LAC review to establish clear and safe plans out of the looked after system – Cath Thomas		↑
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children who can be safely cared for outside of the LAC system can grow up within a family without state intervention.					

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		achieve children's exit from the LAC system. There are 18 SGO applications and 7 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are 3 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications with legal services to be prepared for issue.			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will ensure children who are privately fostered have their needs assessed and are visited appropriately to assure their safety is assured	We will know exactly how many children in Herefordshire are privately fostered and will be able to report that arrangements for their care is appropriate and that they are safeguarded. A monthly report will be provided at SMT to report on private fostering activity in Herefordshire, and report on trend in this ie, increasing or decreasing.	1 Child currently in private fostering  Report on private fostering to be presented to SMT on a regular basis from quarter 2	Report to be developed that provides an overview of all children that are privately fostered and gives SMT the oversight needed to understand this cohort fully within quarter 2. Lead Sue Rogers		↓
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children who are privately fostered will be safely cared for outside their family.					



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<b>Priority 3</b>					
<b>Record appropriate and full information to ensure that we meet the identified needs for children and families to support and achieve outcomes</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Children and family assessments will be completed within 45 days <b>Impact on children</b> 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%  <b>Outturn 2018/19 : 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 80%</b>	90%	Audit to be undertaken reviewing all assessments completed outside of required timescales within the last 3 months to establish common themes. Following audit, action plan to be formulated to address issues arising (Hayley Brooks/Sue Rogers).  Dip sampling to ensure that allocation meeting, 10 day review and 25 day review are taking place (Sue Rogers) to avoid drift and delay.  Team Managers will scrutinise weekly reporting to ensure that they are aware of out of date assessments in their team. They will identify reasons why the assessment is out of timescales, and will record a clear case note indicating these reasons, identifying a date for completion. (Team Managers).		↑
We will use performance information to interrogate practice and performance, to inform progress against improvement plan targets <b>Impact on Children</b> All managers across Childrens and families will know area for development, and can take swift	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.	Performance reports will continue to be available on a weekly basis.  Accurate and accessible performance information to be provided to Heads of Service in line with service priorities (Kath Austin-Bailey).  Team Managers will be clear about their own team's performance, taking responsibility for this. They will address		↑

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action to rectify areas where minimum standards required are not being met.			areas for improvement in consultation with their Head of Service and colleagues within their team, timescales around which will be clarified within performance meetings. (Heads of Service).		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
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	The RAG ratings in each plan will move from majority red to majority green	Plans are updated every quarter, so the process of reviewing performance and reporting on performance against plans is embedded.	Heads of Service will update the AD/HoS meeting monthly, indicating areas of success and areas for on-going improvement. This will be supported by current and accurate data.  Heads of Service will ensure that they scrutinise available data and highlight to the performance team areas of incorrect data in order for this to be corrected.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
As performance improves, Children and families will receive services of a consistently high quality.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Each HoS will provide a SEF to report on overall service area activity on a quarterly basis	SEF will increasingly identify areas of good practice and strengths within service areas.	Self-evaluations have been completed for end of quarter 1.	Heads of Service will complete a SEF by the identified deadline. This will be informed by accurate and current data (Heads of Service).  Heads of Service will have a clear understanding of areas of strength and areas for development within their service. They will identify an action plan to address any areas where performance is not at the required level. (Heads of Service).		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
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 continually driving forward to improve the quality of services.					





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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
A Mosaic improvement group will meet on a monthly basis to develop and improve the efficiency and breadth of reporting across children & families	Performance against timescale targets will improve.	The Mosaic Working Group continues to scope and prioritise Mosaic changes and is taking an active role in evaluating 36 new signs of safety workflows; to be incorporated in the signs of safety workstreams to ensure robust delivery	<p>Providing a clear evidence base, Team Managers from a broad spread of service areas will attend the Mosaic improvement group to report on difficulties or inefficiencies within the Mosaic system. Any action required to address this and associated timescales will be agreed within the improvement group meeting. (Team Managers).</p> <p>Analyse current systems and identify opportunities/efficiencies to enable better data extraction, modifying existing systems where necessary (Performance team).</p> <p>New Signs of safety forms to be developed and tested with input from end users. (Carrie Guest).</p>	Green	Up
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Processes to identify case progression for each child will be improved, so cases that may be subject to drift and delay are quickly identified.					
<b>57</b>					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Looked after children (LAC) reviews are held and records distributed within statutory timescales	95% of 1st LAC reviews held within timescale  <b>Outturn 2018/19 90%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 84%</b>	100%	Duty system for 1 <sup>st</sup> Lac Reviews where the child(ren) not previously subject to CP plans offers increased availability for times slots for allocation of IROs.	Green	Up
<b>Impact on Children</b>	95% of 2nd and subsequent LAC reviews held within timescale  <b>Outturn 2018/19 84%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 89%</b>	90%	IRO posts will be 100% permanent staff by 06.07.20, increasing staff stability and reducing changes in IROs which contributed to changes in dates of Lac Reviews.		





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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children will not experience drift and delay. Plans will be progressed due to reviews taking place within timescales.	90% of LAC review minutes written and distributed within 20 working days  <b>Outturn 2018/19 48%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 48%</b>	52%	Looked after children review minutes deadlines reviewed monthly in supervision with Principal IRO on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO. Data reporting remains 'after the event' and this still requires manual monitoring.		
Life story work and later life letters will be completed for every child moving to adoption in a timely manner.	The backlog of life story work and later life letters will reduce every month and be eliminated	All of the life story books or later life letters have been completed.	The backlog has now been cleared. Successful elimination of the backlog to be sustained and maintained through on-going use of the Life story book and later life letter tracker on SharePoint.		
<b>Impact on Children</b> Children will be able to understand their own family and care history	<b>Outturn August 2019 was 42 outstanding</b>		Monthly monitoring and review will take place to ensure that a backlog is not re-occurring. If this does re-occur, the head of service will develop a timely action plan to address. (Gill Cox).		




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<b>Priority 4</b>					
<b>Ensuring consistency of decision making for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Strategy discussions will take place within timescales	Strategy discussions are held within timescale - target of 90%	97%	To maintain the current outturn above the target of 95% - all operational HoS		
<b>Impact on children</b>					
Risks to children and young people are assessed, and intervention agreed is effective in keeping them safe	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 97%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 97%</b>				
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Section 47 (S47) investigations will take place within timescales Reduce % of Section 47 investigations that are NFA	S47 investigations will take place within timescales. Target 95%	85%	Team managers use weekly data to pro-actively plan work – all operational HoS  Team managers will be challenged at monthly performance meetings regarding compliance with timescales for S.47's – management team		
<b>Impact on children</b>					
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.	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 34%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 67%</b>				
	Reduction of S47 that are NFA. <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 55%</b>  Target: TBC	<b>52%</b>	Complete deep dive audit with our partners on high numbers of Section 47 investigations that are NFA. Lead Hayley Brooks		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) and Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC's) will take place within timescales	ICPC's and RCPC's will take place within timescales Target 90%	ICPC: 82%	S.47's are completed by day 10 to enable reports to be shared with parents prior to ICPC and conference takes place within timescale – Sue Rogers		
	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : ICPC 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : ICPC 75%</b>				





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<b>Impact on children</b>	RCPC 100%	RCPC: 100%	Team managers use weekly data to pro-actively plan work – all operational HoS		
Risks to children will be assessed, and services required to protect them will be identified and planned, so risk is reduced and children are safeguarded.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
LAC Reviews will take place within timescales	LAC reviews will take place within target timescales 90% <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 88%</b>	Total LAC reviews % in timescale 90%.	LAC review schedules reviewed in monthly supervision for each IRO – Barb Langstaffe to monitor		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will not be subject to drift and delay					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Group Supervision will be held on a monthly basis, led by senior practitioners or managing practitioners, to aid and enhance learning and development	HoS will report in their improvement plans that group supervisions have taken place as required.	Group supervision has commenced across all services.	<p>Dates for group supervision will be planned at least 3 months in advance – all operational HoS</p> <p>SP/MP's to provide HoS with attendees and topics for reflective sessions on a monthly basis – all operational HoS</p> <p>All senior practitioners and managing practitioners will be trained in Signs of Safety model for reflective supervision so that they can lead on implementation of this model - PSW</p> <p>SP's and MP's have appropriate caseloads to enable them to have capacity to complete this work (maximum of 50% for SP's and no cases for MP's) – all operational HoS</p>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children and families will benefit from improved service delivery through social worker reflection on practice.					

## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will enable CP Court workers to focus on CP cases, cases in pre proceedings and proceedings.	Maintain CP numbers @ 140-150 (appropriate number for Hereford demographic compared to statistical neighbours	CP numbers @ month end: March 2020:108 June 2020: 115	We need to note that whilst we have decreased the number of CP we are below the demographic compared to our statistical neighbours.  1. Inclusion of data re CP plans ending in suite of weekly reporting – Performance Lead / Head of CP Court  2. Audit to update our understanding of declining numbers of children subject to a plan and the shortening of time that they remain on a plan. Lead: Hayley Brookes		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Decrease in repeat CP interventions with children	Second CPP (within 2 years)			
Children who require intervention as they are at risk of significant harm will receive an intervention that promotes their safety and wellbeing.		Mar 2020: 21% June 2020: 20%			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) recommendations from LAC reviews are agreed and progressed within timescales	90% of LAC review recommendations are completed and sent to relevant team manager within 5 working days of the review <b>Outturn 2018/19 73%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 77%</b>	73%	Looked after children review recommendation deadlines reviewed monthly in supervision with Principal IRO on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO to address performance.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	90% of LAC review recommendations are responded to by the relevant team manager within 5	92%	HoS Safeguarding and Review to raise by 03.07.20 that Heads of Service remind Team Managers of the timescales for responding to Lac Review recommendations within 5 working days.		
Children's plans will be progressed so they will not experience drift and delay and					


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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<p>the best options for their future will be progressed swiftly.</p>	<p>working days of having received them</p> <p><b>Outturn 2018/19 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 72%</b></p>				
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## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Priority 5</b>					
<b>Policy and practice that enables good quality social work for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<p>NEW: CP plans will progress through purposeful and effective multi-agency strengths based practice</p> <p>Impact:</p>	<p>90% of core groups will take place every 4 weeks</p> <p>Core groups will be chaired and recorded using the core group agenda</p>	<p>Dataset is in development. Dip sampling for quality assurance to commence Aug 20. Mosaic workflow improvements have been made. Audit of CP visits completed July 20: 40% good, 60% require improvement, no cases audited were 'inadequate'. Identified learning from audit shared with staff Aug 20.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inclusion of data re core groups in suite of weekly reporting – Performance Lead / Head of CP Court</li> <li>2. Monthly dip sample of core groups to evidence quality of meetings taking place, dynamic planning and review, and use of core group agenda – Head of CP Court</li> <li>3. Revision of Mosaic workflow requests to allow for timely approval and distribution of minutes – Performance Lead / Head of CP Court (in progress)</li> <li>4. Thematic audit of CP visits to establish qualitative baseline from which practice standards will be developed – Head of CP Court (planned for July 20)</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
<p>Children will have improved outcomes and will not experience grief and delay</p>	<p>Core groups records will be approved and distributed within 5 working days</p> <p>CP plans will have measurable and achievable actions that have timescales and are easy for families to understand, and no more than 6 actions at any one time</p> <p>CP visits to children will be purposeful and reflect high quality, collaborative interactions with families, and direct work with children</p>				

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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>NEW: CP plans will progress through purposeful and effective multi-agency strengths based practice</p>	<p>90% of CIN reviews will take place within required timescales</p> <p>CIN reviews will be chaired and recorded using the core group agenda</p>	<p>Revised meeting agenda implemented Jul 20 to combine agendas for core groups and CIN reviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation of revised CIN guidance – Head of MASH, Assessment and CIN (in progress)</li> <li>2. Revision of core group agenda to include CIN reviews – QA Manager (in progress)</li> <li>3. Revision of CIN performance reporting to more readily identify drift – Performance Lead</li> <li>4. Revision of Mosaic workflow requests to allow for timely approval and distribution of minutes – Performance Lead</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
<p>Children will have improved outcomes and will not experience drift and delay</p>	<p>CIN review records will be approved and distributed within 5 working days</p> <p>CIN plans will have measurable and achievable actions that have timescales and are easy for families to understand, and no more than 6 actions at any one time</p> <p>CIN visits to children will be purposeful and reflect high quality, collaborative interactions with families, and direct work with children</p>				

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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will consider permanence planning at the earliest opportunity upon agreement to issue care proceedings.</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will not experience drift and delay. The most appropriate permanency option for each individual child will be considered at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>More children have appropriate permanence plans identified earlier in proceedings.</p>	<p>Practice tools and standards shared with relevant staff Jun 20. 4 training sessions delivered by ACE between 16<sup>th</sup> July – 13<sup>th</sup> August, further dates being arranged. Revised process for convening initial permanency planning meetings in place May 20.</p>	<p>Potential permanence plans are planned for as part of PLO – Cath Thomas</p> <p>Training on foster to adopt will be provided to all assessment and CP/Court managers by ACE – Cath Thomas</p> <p>Initial permanency planning meetings will take place within 5 working days of issuing – Cath Thomas</p>		↔
<p>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</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will not experience drift and delay. Parents will be clear what needs to change and timescales for children for changes to be made.</p>	<p>75% of pre proceedings concluded within 12 weeks</p> <p>100% of pre-proceedings concluded within 16 weeks</p>	<p>Revised panel arrangements agreed and in place Apr 20. Comprehensive suite of procedures, tools and templates available on TriX from May 20. PLO workflow in mosaic implement Apr 20, dataset awaited.</p>	<p>Delay in recruitment of case progression officer and delay in making changes to the alternative to care panel; but these have now been implemented in q1</p> <p>Development of performance reporting for pre-proceedings Performance Lead / Head of CP Court (in progress)</p>		↔



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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will front load work to ensure when we do enter proceedings these can be concluded in a timely manner and with the most appropriate permanence plan for the child, avoiding long term foster care unless absolutely necessary</p>	<p>Maintain high performance in care proceedings concluding in 26 weeks. Increase in the number of children in kinship placements Increase in the number of children subject to SGO i) at conclusion of care proceedings; ii) within 12 months of care proceedings concluding Increase in the number of children returning home following care proceedings</p>	<p>Family Network Assessment Record implemented Jun 20. Legal planning meetings and permanence planning meetings include greater focus on kinship and SGO from Jul 20. Recruitment to FSW vacancies in progress, advert closed 14/08. With effect from Jul 20 CP Court retain all cases where reunification or SGO could be achieved within 12 months post care proceedings. Average length of care proceedings concluded in Q1 = 23.3 weeks. Of 16 children whose care proceedings concluded in Q1, 2 were reunified and 7 were retained by CP</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation of Family Network Assessment Record (in progress) – Head of CP Court</li> <li>2. Implementation of GenoPro (achieved Q1) – Head of CP Court</li> <li>3. Revise Legal Planning Meeting and IPPM/RPPM records to include more focus on kinship and SGO - CPO</li> <li>4. Approval of protocol for legal advice to be funded for potential kinship carers who have been assessed negatively (in progress) – Head of CP Court</li> <li>5. Increase family support resource in CP Court to focus on reunification following proceedings and to support potential kinship placements to succeed and progress to SGO (in progress) – Head of CP Court</li> <li>6. Extend the remit of CP Court to CP and Permanence, retaining cases where children can progress to reunification or SGO within 12 months post care proceedings (in progress) – Head of CP Court</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will not be subject to extended care proceedings Children will remain within their birth families and where this is not possible, long term foster care will be the last resort</p>					



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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

		Court to progress to reunification / SGO. 2 had plans of adoption and 5 transferred to the LAC service with a plan of long term fostering.			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will ensure cases are transferred without delay to the appropriate part of the service	There will be no unallocated cases.	Cases are transferred as appropriate with the teams and this is monitored by the HOS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of Transfer Step in Mosaic (in progress) – Head of CP Court</li> <li>2. Development of Transfer Step reporting – Performance Lead</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will receive the right service from the right social work service at the right time					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
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.	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.	The task and finish group report concerning child exploitation from the scrutiny committee has been published and the executive response is to be drafted	<p>Risk management meetings are being completed. Reporting on activity in this area of the service to scrutiny committee, November/December 2019. Still awaiting final report from scrutiny. Lead Barb Langstaffe</p> <p>Where there are multiple risk factors (eg. co-existence of risk of exploitation, substance misuse, mental health and school exclusion) these are identified on monthly CE tracker. Partner agency involvement and attendance at Risk Management Meetings to identify 100% contribution of involved agencies. Non-</p>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children and young people at risk of Child exploitation are diverted or where necessary supported to reduce the risk of harm					



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			attendance of required agency to be escalated. Lead Barb Langstaffe		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Identified improvement and learning activity from audits will be completed in a timely manner.	All identified learning activity will be undertaken within the month which follows the relevant audit.	All identified learning activity has been undertaken as planned.	1. Heads of Service to ensure that all learning and improvement activity from audits is captured in service improvement plans for the relevant quarter – all HoS.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	All improvement activity will be undertaken within 3 months of the relevant audit.	All but one area of improvement activity has been undertaken – Awaiting response from HOS safeguarding and review (10/08/20).			
Learning will inform and develop systems and practice, improving services and interventions offered to children and families.					
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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
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.	QA Manager report will evidence bi monthly learning events have taken place.	Bi monthly events are taking place as required. Attendance April 2020 – 20 staff over 3 sessions offered. Attendance June 2020 – 26 staff over 4 sessions offered.	1. Deliver bi - monthly learning events. Lead: Hayley Brookes 2. Develop quarterly QA report. Lead: Hayley Brooks		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will benefit from having a stable workforce that is highly skilled					



## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
All practitioners will attend at least one training event or workshop per quarter (in addition to learning activity undertaken within their own service area)	All practitioners will maintain a CPD log to be reviewed with their manager on a quarterly basis as part of personal supervision, focussing upon their identified learning needs and how they have applied the learning in their practice.	Consultation re revised approach to supervision has been completed and proposal presented to AD/HoS meeting 10 <sup>th</sup> Aug. Proposals to be further developed and implemented Q2-Q3, led by SW Academy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a CPD log – identified lead in SW Academy</li> <li>2. Consult on and implement revised approach to personal supervision to improve its effectiveness in relation to professional development and learning – Head of CP Court</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Impact: children and families will receive a high quality service from skilled and knowledgeable practitioners					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Monthly audit activity will take place and will lead to sustained improvements in practice	Audit activity will take place every month as planned. Outcome will be reported into AD/HOS business and practice meeting on a regular basis. % of work graded good will increase. % work graded inadequate will decrease.	All audit activity has taken place as planned (thematic/moderate d/deep dive). Reports have been discussed at AD/HOS business and practice meeting monthly. Quarter 1: 37% good 58% RI 5% inadequate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult on and consider improvements to the QALF to move to auditing alongside SWs – QA manager</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
As an organisation, we will identify good practice that can be rolled out across all services, so children and families in Hereford will benefit from improvement in social work practise and intervention.					


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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Quarterly deep dive audits 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</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Quarterly deep dive thematic audits will take place as planned. Outcomes will be reported on to AD/oS business and practice meeting and at CMM.</p> <p>Training programme will be informed by outcomes of deep dive audit and practice in specific service areas will improve.</p>	<p>Bi monthly learning events held in response to deep dive audit outcomes – June 2020, neglect. Findings reported to AD HoS 13.07.20 and CMM 15.07.20.</p> <p>Training programme is currently being developed by the Social Work Academy.</p>	<p>Agree theme for next deep dive. Lead: Haley Brookes</p>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Children will be encouraged to participate in their LAC reviews in a meaningful way</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will be able to voice their views and inform their care plans.</p>	<p>90% of children over the age of 4 participate in their LAC review in some form</p> <p><b>Outturn 2018/19 84%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 94%</b></p>	<p>95%</p>	<p>With the quantity of participation met, improvements on the quality of participation to be considered at IRO Team Meeting on 01.07.20</p>		


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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
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	85% of children have a consultation with their IRO as part of each LAC review  <b>Outturn 2018/19 97%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 95.44%</b>	93%	With the quantity of participation met, improvements on the quality of participation to be considered at IRO Team Meeting on 01.07.20		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
The wishes and feelings of children will be heard, validated, and will be part of establishing plans for children.					

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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Priority 6</b>					
<b>A single practice approach that delivers and improves quality and outcomes for children and families (Signs of Safety)</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Signs of safety will be implemented across the council so there is a consistent approach across all partners in working with children and families.	Signs of safety is implemented, embedded and informs all practice across the directorate and partnership.	Signs of safety implementation is continuing to progress with virtual training sessions and workshops taking place. Prior to COVID-19, 3 sessions of Signs of Safety Assessment and next steps planning took place along with initial workshops for 4 of the 5 identified work streams	<i>Please read alongside Signs of Safety detailed delivery plan:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revised introductory Signs of Safety training to be delivered (up to 6 events) . Lead Beverley Edwards</li> <li>2. Collaborative audit tool developed and training on it delivered. Lead Joe Davenport</li> <li>3. Practice manual and supporting practice standards co-produced with staff. Lead Joe Davenport</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
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.					




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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Priority 7</b>					
<b>The leadership of change to prioritise better quality and outcomes for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Feedback and learning from audit activity will evidence improvement in the quality of social work practice on a quarterly basis.	Audit activity will show an increase in the % of work graded good: End June 2020 target; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% good.</li> <li>0% inadequate</li> </ul>	End June 2020: 37% good 58% RI 5% inadequate	1. Develop outline QA quarterly report which captures key messages from audit activity and how learning can be put into practice. Lead Hayley Brooks.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	End September 2020 target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55% good</li> <li>0% inadequate</li> </ul>				
Practice will improve for children and families in Herefordshire.	End December 2020 target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% good.</li> <li>0% inadequate.</li> </ul>				
73	End March 2021 target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% good</li> <li>0% inadequate</li> </ul>				
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will increase our children's social work leadership and capacity to enable the council to have the capacity to improve.	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.	Re-audit of the quality of core group meetings in CP court took place April 2020. Increase in overall quality of work from 35% in July 2019 to 54% in April 2020. No cases rated inadequate in	1. Develop Workforce Strategy that will have action plan on reducing workloads and career progression. Lead Andy Gill.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will receive a high quality and timely service					



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74		<p>April 2020 CP court re-audit. Workload - % Social Workers holding more than 20 cases is currently at 0% in 4 of 10 teams. There is a range in the remaining 6 teams from 14% (CP Court team 2) to 50% (in both LAC teams). CWD % has decreased over the quarter from 80% in April to 33% in June.</p>			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Actions required following audits will be followed up by QA manager to ensure they are completed by a specified date. A weekly report will be provided to the AD and HOS highlighting outstanding audit actions. HOS will ensure these actions are completed within 48 hours.</p>	<p>QA manager will report into AD/HoS meeting that there are no actions outstanding from timescale agreed.</p>	<p>Any overdue audit actions emailed by QA Manager to AD Liz Elgar weekly. End June 2020 – No overdue audit actions to report. Reported to AD HoS meetings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop reporting system and monitor through SMT that audit action have been completed and recorded on child's record. Lead Liz Elgar.</li> </ol>		
Impact on Children					
<p>Cases where actions are identified to benefit children and families will be completed in a timely manner, improving the</p>					

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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>safety and wellbeing of children receiving social care intervention</p> <p>Team Manages will lead improving performance against KPIs, and report on to ADs in monthly performance challenge sessions</p>	<p>Monthly team performance scorecards will show areas of good practice and areas requiring management attention and development.</p>	<p>Monthly Performance support &amp; challenge meetings have commenced in Q1 all team managers have taken part and performance is seeing improvement</p>	<p>1. Focus on practice quality through monthly meetings – highlight evidence for quarterly QA report. Lead Andy Gill.</p>		
<p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>The quality of service provided to children and families will improve as performance across all areas of the service improves.</p>					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>The organisation will work be configured to change the culture of practice, to work with families, intervene at the lowest level of intervention where possible, and maintain children within their family network.</p>	<p>Our LAC population will decrease. Our CP numbers will stabilise. Audits will demonstrate a strength based approach involving families in plans at all stages.</p>	<p>LAC Population has seen a small decrease CP numbers have seen a slight increase in the quarter</p> <p>Creation of family and child feedback</p>	<p>1. Implement the DLT Leadership Pledge; incorporate into SMT and evidence of change in culture linked to Signs of Safety. Lead Chris Baird.</p>		



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		survey is in progress – to be completed by 01/11/20.			
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children and families will receive the appropriate level of service at the right time.					




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Priority 8					
Sustainable workforce to provide continuity for children and families					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Every staff member will receive regular supervision	90% supervisions undertaken every calendar month  <b>Overall Outturn 2018/ 19 : 71% Outturn 2019/ 20 : 84%</b>	June supervisions: <b>86% overall</b> 83% operational 96% business support	1. Use monthly Team Manager Support and challenge meetings to drill down into what's helping and hindering and identify SMART actions for each team. Lead Andy Gill		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will receive a high quality service and are safeguarded through plans and support which are effective					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Recruitment of social workers, will mean caseloads will be at a manageable level to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities and have time for direct work	Fortnightly caseload performance information will evidence all caseloads under 20.	% workers holding more than 20 cases. 16+ team: 0% Assessment Team 1: 25% Assessment Team 2: 0% Assessment Team 3: 0% Court Team 1: 0% Court Team 2: 14% Court Team 3: 17% CWD: 33% LAC Team 1: 50% LAC Team 2: 50%	1. Complete review of recruitment of retention which will include specific actions on manageable workloads (see below). Lead Andy Gill		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
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.					



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(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We have put in place a range of measures to enhance salaries and benefits for social workers.</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children benefit from having well qualified, committed social workers</p>	Vacancies will be filled and over time Herefordshire will recruit permanent social workers who stay	<p>As at June 2020</p> <p>Permanent 127.3</p> <p>Agency 25.4</p> <p>Permanent Vacancies 38.8</p> <p>Empty seats 5.4</p> <p>Fixed Term 4.2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete review of systems and processes around recruitment – develop efficient way of recruiting (agreed action plan). Lead Andy Gill</li> <li>2. Develop new Core Offer to the job market and test. Lead Andy Gill</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will recruit newly qualified social workers to complete an Assessed and Supported year in employment (ASYE) social workers.</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Herefordshire will increase the number of qualified, substantive social workers, reducing change in social worker for children</p>	<p>We will have a clear rolling programme of ASYE joining the organisation and ASYE completing their first year of practice.</p> <p>7 NQSWs who started their ASYE in 2018 and finished in 2019</p> <p>6 NQSWs started in September 2017 and finished in September 2018</p> <p>3 NQSWs who started in June 2017 and finished in 2018</p>	<p>ASYE's :- 2019/2020</p> <p>Q1 = 3</p> <p>Q2 = 3</p> <p>Q3 = 3</p> <p>Q4 = 4</p> <p>ASYE's :- 2020/2021</p> <p>Q1 = 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop action plan to increase numbers of NQSWs building on recent good progress. Learn from other councils work. Lead Andy Gill</li> <li>2. Develop new SWA website that will include focus on NQSWs and ASYE offer. Lead Andy Gill</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will establish a clear social work career pathway to enable social workers to invest in a career in Herefordshire</p>	<p>We will retain workers in Herefordshire, and appoint to senior positions from within.</p>	<p>Data re current establishments, staffing and budget position being collated to develop</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop careers progression panel to enable social workers to progress to becoming Advanced Practitioners. Lead Cath Thomas</li> </ol>		

## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

<b>Impact on Children</b>		a proposal, now being led by SW Academy.			
Children will benefit from having well qualified, committed and experienced social workers.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
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	The apprenticeship scheme will be operational, with all places filled.	6 apprentices started in Q4. Further plans are being worked up to offer further apprenticeships	1. Re-tender apprenticeship contract so we can recruit new apprentices (8) that can start in early 2021. Lead Andy Gill		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
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 changes in the social worker allocated to work with them.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will recruit an additional Quality Assurance (QA) manager to provide greater opportunity for quality assurance, feedback and learning	Additional QA manager will be in post.	Included in budget setting 2020/21. Funding secured.	1. Interviews held and additional QA manager in post. Lead Andy Gill		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					

## Appendix A - Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021

(updated to end of quarter one, June 2020)

Children and families will benefit from improvement in intervention and quality of social work practice identified in QA activity.					
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**Direction of travel key:-**



Increase in improvement of direction of travel



Remained same as previous period



Decrease in improvement of direction of travel



<b>Our Priority areas</b>	
<b>1. Getting it right for children and families first time</b>	<p>Definition – Through the work of the front door (MASH, Early Help) to provide the right support and guidance to children, young people and families at home, and in their communities that ensures we deliver effective services; whilst working consistently to the levels of need.</p> <p>What good looks like – Measurable evidence that children and families are receiving the right services that meet their needs at the right time and in the right way.</p>
<b>2. Keeping Children and families together where possible; including a reduction in our looked after children numbers</b>	<p>Definition – Early identification of families and early intervention to prevent crisis and to ensure that the home environments remain safe for children; early permanence planning for children who require it which sees long term foster care as a last resort; a focus on reducing the number of children in care and family re-unification.</p> <p>What good looks like – Measurable evidence that children and families are receiving effective support that keeps families together within their own community.</p>
<b>3. Record appropriate and full information to ensure that we meet the identified needs for children and families to support and achieve outcomes.</b>	<p>Definition – To do our work justice and to support children and families there is a need to capture our full activity in our records that reflects the child’s journey.</p> <p>What good looks like – Full and accurate records that clearly explain children’s lived experience, the reasons for social work intervention, the decisions made about them and holds the necessary data to enable full reporting that drives improved outcomes for Children and Families. Use plain language that a child can read and understand.</p>
<b>4. Ensuring consistency of decision making for children and families</b>	<p>Definition – To use evidence to understand the children and family that will enable social workers and managers to take informed and consistent decisions based upon identified needs; decision making that is defensible best practice.</p> <p>What good looks like – Appropriate decisions being taken and recorded in a timely and effective manner for all children and families that change their lives for the better</p>
<b>5. Policy and practice that enables good quality social work for children and families</b>	<p>Definition – Identifying best practice that informs policy making to improve outcomes for children and families that enables good quality social work to take place.</p> <p>What good looks like – Social Work practitioners tell us that they feel confident and competent with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to reflect and learn in order to deliver good quality social work; effective work with regional and national partners with a focus on what works best for children and families.</p>
<b>6. A single practice approach that deliver and improve quality and outcomes for children and families (Signs of Safety)</b>	<p>Definition – Consistently deliver the sign of safety approach at the right standards with children and families; recognising and involving all key partners in achieving change.</p> <p>What good looks like - A single practice approach embedded across Herefordshire that delivers better outcomes for children and families.</p>
<b>7. The leadership of change to prioritise better quality and outcomes for children and families</b>	<p>Definition – A culture of leadership and change that promotes practice leadership, performance accountability, and knows what good looks like that leads to better outcomes for children and families.</p>

What good looks like – Proactive strengths-based leadership that creates the environment where good quality social work thrives and improves the outcomes for children and families. High Support and High Challenge

**8. Sustainable and skilled workforce to provide continuity for children and families**

Definition – Having the right people with the right skills to meet the needs of the children and families in Herefordshire

What good looks like – A permanent workforce that is professional, invested in continuous learning; and committed to achieving improved outcomes for children and families; with a commitment to remain in Herefordshire.

**Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Social Work Self-Assessment to end of June 2020/2021****Overview: - (Chris Baird Director for Children and Families)**

Herefordshire children's safeguarding self-assessment has been produced to broadly reflect the child's journey across service areas. It also incorporates reflections on quality assurance, performance management, systems and development and workforce including recruitment and retention.

The self-assessment is updated on a quarterly basis with each head of service/service manager taking an active role in producing the assessment for their area. This continues our approach of developing our performance management culture. This self-assessment is up to the end of the fourth quarter for the 2019/20 financial year.

Herefordshire has been rated as requiring improvement for overall effectiveness by Ofsted in the 2018 inspection of local authority children's services. Within this the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection and the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection were judged as requiring improvement. The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families was judged inadequate, overall in not securing an environment within which good quality social work can flourish, whilst recognising that some areas had improved since the last inspection insufficient progress had been made in a number of key areas.

The Ofsted focused visit of January 2019 looked at the local authority's arrangements for receiving referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of significant harm, children transferring to and from Early Help services, the effectiveness of child protection enquiries and the quality of assessments and interventions for children in need of help and protection. From a very low base action taken by senior leaders had improved the overall stability of the social care workforce and that this had been achieved over a relatively short period of time. Plans for improvement were appropriately focused, with a realistic view of quality of practice which was too variable and not yet good. Revised performance management and quality assurance approaches were starting to show some early impact. The pace of progress was hampered by staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting to key management posts including the lead officer for quality assurance. There continued to be strong political and corporate support for children's services.

These themes were echoed in the Ofsted focused visit of December 2019 which looked at our arrangements for children in need and children subject to a child protection plan. This included elements of contextual safeguarding, particularly peer on peer abuse. Little progress had been made in improving the quality of practice, including the quality of management supervision and guidance and timely recording and response to audits. Work was affected by recruitment. There was recognition that we know ourselves well, that the quality assurance framework provides appropriate and in depth knowledge, that there is senior leadership commitment to the service including resourcing and further plans for development. There was recognition of the work in the children with disabilities team which was noted as being demonstrably different. There was also strong recognition of the extensive strategic and operational work regarding peer on peer abuse, including the work with education settings.

Herefordshire has continued to implement the recommendations from external high-performing Partners in Practice (PIP), from both Doncaster and Essex Councils in 2019. Using PiP support was planned to continue to in 2020 to support our improvement and has the commitment from the DfE. We have been in discussions with the DfE and Essex and will be taking this improvement work forward in quarter 2 and quarter3; meeting with colleagues from Essex virtually.

**Summary: Early Help (Nicky Turvey – Early Help Manager)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The Early Help approach in Herefordshire is ‘Working towards Stronger Families and Connected Communities’.

Early Help has developed considerably over the past two years since the introduction of Herefordshire’s Early Help Assessment (EHA) which replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There are 1324 EHAs (June 2020) compared with 500 CAFs in January 2018.

Families with emerging or more complex needs below the threshold of requiring statutory intervention are identified and assessed using the EHA. The assessment is of the whole family and identifies their unmet needs then an outcome focused support plan is drawn up with the family to bring about sustainable change and leave the family stronger for the future. Each family has a ‘Key Worker’ who is the main link for the family and coordinates the agencies required to bring about the sustainable change.

Partnership working is strong within Early Help in Herefordshire. Data for the year 2019/20: The Key Worker for EHAs - Primary Schools 22.6%, Health Visitors 17.2%, Other Health professionals 10.9%, Secondary Schools 10.2% and Local Authority early help staff 28.3%.

Early Help is fully integrated with the Troubled Families programme, the EHA is linked to the troubled families criteria and outcomes for families to the Herefordshire Family Outcomes Framework, recently updated in line with the new Troubled Families Financial Framework 2020/21.

Early Help Assessments are managed by the Early Help Coordinator team who administer the assessments, support key workers and organise and facilitate Family Network Meetings (FNMs). FNMs are multi-agency meetings where partner agencies meet to discuss cases which are sticking (with the consent of the family), share good practice and discuss any community concerns. These are usually held twice termly in eight locations throughout the county and are well attended by representatives from schools, health professionals, mental health workers, housing associations, Police and voluntary agencies. Due to Covid-19 they are now taking place virtually. This has had positive consequences with the meetings having improved attendance. The FNM’s are usually chaired by an experienced Early Help Manager and social care provide a senior social worker at every other meeting to give advice and guidance on cases. The presence of a social care representative since November 2018 has been appreciated by partner agencies.

Early Help internal support services are trained in Make Every Contact Count (MECC) so are equipped to talk to, signpost and support families about healthy eating, oral health (childhood obesity and dental health are both issues in Herefordshire), physical activity, smoking cessation, alcohol consumption, sexual health and mental wellbeing. Early Help delivers Solihull and Triple P parenting programmes to mixed groups of parents from those accessing just universal services to those with children on Child Protection Plans. The programmes are Solihull for parents of children 0-5 years, Triple P standard for parents of children 2-10, Triple P Teen for parents with teenagers, and Stepping Stones Triple P for parents of children with additional needs. The delivery of parenting programmes to groups of parents in a building have been suspended due to Covid-19 but ‘bite sized’ parenting workshops are being held virtually.

There are three specialist family support services working with the whole family with EHAs. They go into the family home and work with individual family members and families as a whole. The three services are: an internal, experienced Early Help Family Support team which works with families with the most complex needs and those families stepping down from statutory intervention; Vennture4families, a commissioned service using a professional link worker and volunteer model; and Homestart, also commissioned and which uses a volunteer model. Vennture work with families who are lower level three on the Herefordshire level of needs and Homestart with families with less complex needs. The specialist services seek to address the core issues affecting families systemically such as parenting issues, mental health issues, domestic abuse, problem debts, parental conflict, drugs and alcohol abuse, with a strong focus on worklessness using the Troubled Families Employment Advisor.

Implication to the services of Covid-19 and the work around:

The three specialist services have continued to support families and work with them to bring about sustainable change. Each service followed their own organisations guidelines as to what they could do. The internal Early Help family Support team suspended home visits at the start of Covid-19 except for a very few cases where work was required to stop the family escalating into statutory services but these visits followed Public Health/Council guidelines and PPE was used if required. Work continued with all families by phone or using 'WhatsApp' video facility. As lockdown has been eased visits have increased, support workers are again working with families in their home or outdoor space following Public Heath/Council guidelines.

These specialist services continue to close cases with a 'Family Wellbeing Plan' which leaves the family with information on the success they've achieved and where to go within their family, friends and community if they have a 'wobble' rather than perhaps letting things slide and requiring specialist services intervention again. The plan can have a photo of the family on it and be laminated so it can be put on the fridge for easy access.

The link between Early Help and the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) continues to develop and the plan to have an Early Help Hub (EHH) linked to MASH is moving forward. The EHH will be located beside MASH and take all level 1, 2 & 3 contacts and level 3 MARF's thereby ensuring families are offered the 'Right Support at the Right Time' and releasing MASH to spend more time on investigating level 4 cases. Any cases deemed to be level 4 by the EHH will go directly into MASH and vice versa those cases on further investigation by MASH which don't meet threshold will go to the EHH for signposting, advice and guidance or support through an EHA being offered as appropriate.

Children Centre services was restructured in June 2019 in order to target resources to support the most vulnerable families with children 0-5 years and use some resource to engage and map community assets for families with children 0-18. The service now has a team of early years support workers who deliver one to one support in families' homes using evidence based intervention such as Let's Talk with your Baby, Communication Steps, Bookstart Corner, Solihull Parenting, and they can give guidance and support on, for example, healthy eating, dental health and immunisations. During Covid-19 this service continued to work remotely with families by phone and Whatsapp video conferencing and only visiting in exceptional circumstances and then following Public Health/Council guidelines. The service has now produced videos of some of their programmes so they can work through these remotely with families. As with the internal early help family support team this team is now visiting some families and working with them in their home or outside space as appropriate.

Throughout lockdown all the internal early help services were involved in delivering food parcels dropping off activities to vulnerable families.

The Solid Roots programme is an investment to improve outcomes for foundation (0-5) children and families. This includes training for early years professionals to ensure children have adequate speech, language and communication skills so that they are ready to engage in school. Training early year's professionals in the Solihull Approach and purchasing Solihull licenses so all parents in Herefordshire can access Solihull parenting courses on line and training the early year's workforce in a range of areas to ensure all children reach a good level of development. During Covid-19 the training for early year's professionals has been suspended but the Solihull on line parenting courses continue to be promoted.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Early Help Assessment data is collated and analysed on a monthly basis. The data has shown the increase in the number of families being identified, assessed and supported to achieve sustainable change. In 2018 there were 500 Early Help cases with evidence of approximately 30% making sustainable change, in July 2020 there were 1324 early help cases. The conversion rate at the end of the Troubled Families Programme phase 2 was 71.0% of families who met at least two Troubled Families criteria and made sustainable change for at least 6 months (Troubled Families data).

Early Help assessments are quality assured when received by the Early Help Coordinator (EHC) team. Key workers from partner agencies are supported by the EHC team to improve their assessment skills if required.

The support work of the Early Help family support team is audited on a monthly basis, any actions are addressed within a month through individual supervision sessions or any trends at team meetings. Feedback from families about the service is collated and analysed quarterly in order to develop the service and address any issues. The feedback is almost always positive and compliments about the work of the team is regularly received from families and partner agencies. The two Early Help commissioned services are regularly reviewed at quarterly monitoring meetings.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Identifying and assessing families in need of Early Help by partner agencies is well established. 500 cases in January 2018 and 1324 in June 2020.
2. Children Centre Services became integrated into Early Help and the EHA is used to access the service in 2019. They now supporting the most vulnerable families with children 0-5 years. The measure will be through Troubled Families payment by results.
3. Two primary schools are paying for the 'added value' of having an EH FSW linked to their school as they see the benefit of the work they do.
4. All three specialist family support services are using the closure of cases with a 'Family Wellbeing Plan' This leaves the family with a plan of who to go to within their own network of family, friends and the community before requiring any specialist services, leaving them stronger.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. To further develop the Early Help work in MASH through a single front door. The development of the Early Help Hub is well underway and will go live on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.
2. To develop a strength based approach within Early Help – Signs of Safety to be rolled out over the next three years. Training to early help staff and partner agencies to commence in September 2020.
3. To develop the use of Mosaic as a database for all early help partners. It is used as a caseload management system by internal council teams which allows information to be shared easily when cases are stepped up or down. The development will be through a portal - Finestre with controlled access for partners but allowing information to flow both ways. March 2021. Work on the portal is going well and will be ready to test in September 2020. Partners agreeing to test the system are CAMHs and 2 schools.

	<p>4. To improve the knowledge of Herefordshire’s community assets available to families and share this knowledge on WISH (Wellbeing, Information &amp; Signposting for Herefordshire) and with partner agencies. Phase 1 completed. Regular checking of information and sharing at Family Network Meetings. Development work going on with Adults &amp; Communities Directorate to incorporate this area of work into the Talk Community and Community Hub service.</p>
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Thinking about practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that the early help practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being early help practice has just lost its and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



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**Summary: MASH and Assessment Service (Sue Rogers – Head of MASH and Assessment)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The June 2018 OFSTED inspection identified that the “Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is responsive and ensures that good-quality information sharing results in strong decision-making”. The January 2019 OFSTED focused visit commented “effectiveness of responses in the MASH has been maintained and improved since the last inspection”.

OFSTED noted that a significant number of contacts are signposted away from children’s social care, which would indicate that too many children were being referred that did not reach threshold for intervention. 1938 contacts were received in Q1, 366, 18.89% contacts progressed to referral. This is below the target of 20%. Contact completed with 24 hours is 68.1%, this is an increase in contacts being completed within timescales but not at the target of 95%. Q1 has seen consistency in contacts converting to referrals. The Head of Service for MASH and Assessment and Early Help visited Redbridge Local Authority in December 2019. Redbridge Local Authority are Ofsted rated “outstanding” and are achieving their target of 95% of contacts being completed within 24 hours. Work has been completed to strengthen our approach, learning from Redbridge to develop the front door. Currently we have a system that all Multi agency referral forms come through the MASH which could be diverted to Early Help. As from 21st September 2020 an Early Help Hub will be established working alongside MASH. The Early Help Hub will receive all contact at level 1, 2 and 3 of the Herefordshire level of need response and guidance document, so targeted support can be offered to children and families.

All contacts have a chronology of past risk, concern and involvement with Children's Services. Every attempt is made to contact the parents/ carers for consent for multi-agency checks which are routinely requested. It is an expectation that the threshold document will be used by partners to inform making referrals to MASH, and by MASH social workers to determine the best course of action required for that child/family. There is also an expectation consent will be sought by the referring agency prior to a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) being submitted.

There continues to be a strong multi-agency commitment and engagement with the MASH. Police, Health, Early Help and Education are the main agencies based within the MASH and Probation, Youth Offending Service (YOS) and West Mercia Women's Aid are our virtual partners.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) service is commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Worcestershire Children First provide the out of hours services for Herefordshire. There is a senior manager from Herefordshire available to make decisions when required.

OFSTED noted that Domestic Abuse notifications are not triaged prior to them arriving into MASH and that the process potentially could have left children at risk or not responded to in a timely manner. Work has been undertaken with partner agencies to develop a process that effectively manages the Domestic Abuse notifications. This was enhanced during COVID-19 to respond to a possible increase in Domestic Abuse incidents. This has now been reviews and a proposal has been put forward to partner agencies to implement on 1st September 2020. Domestic Abuse meetings take place on a daily basis with partner agencies on Domestic Abuse incidents that have been assessed at level 2 and 3 according to the Level of Need Response and Guidance Document. This is to ensure appropriate information sharing and support is provided. Level 4 domestic abuse incidents are investigated by MASH. Safe lives have been consulted and further discussions are planned to consider their models and utilizing their training opportunities.

The OFSTED report of July 2018 outlined an inconsistency in the quality of assessments. During the summer of 2018, much work was undertaken, led by the then Quality Assurance manager to develop skills in completing assessments within the service. It was noted that this was not consistent and the historical concerns were not routinely considered. The focused visit in January 2019 evidenced some improvement in the quality of assessments, but identified some children were not being seen in a timely manner. To address this, there is now an expectation children will be seen within 3 days of a case being allocated for the purposes of an assessment being completed, and this is reported on. Data evidences that 72.52% of children are seen within 3 days of the assessment being initiated. This is an improvement but below the target of 95%. Smaller caseloads and weekly reporting will drive this forward.

Time frames for Children and Family Assessments being completed are set at 95%. The Assessment Service are standing at an average of 92.66% completed within timescales.

Child in Need cases remain in the Assessment Teams. There are 7.5 full time equivalent Family Support Worker posts within the Assessment Teams who provide support and direct work with the children and families who are subject to a Child in Need plan. Team Managers are chairing the first Child in Need meeting and devising the Child in Need plan. Case supervision is provided by the Team Manager and the Family Support Worker to ensure consistency and that the plan is progressing appropriately. Senior Practitioners chair the Review Child in need meetings. The Child in Need guidance has been up dated.

To address the timeliness of 3 day visits, Children and Family Assessments and caseloads, the Head of Service and Managers have weekly performance



meetings to ensure targets are met. Team Managers have a monthly meeting with other Team Managers, HOS and AD's to present their teams data, what is working well and what are the challenges

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

A weekly performance report measures the overall rate of contacts that the service receives and the outcome of all contacts following the initial screening process. This is measured in terms of the percentage of referrals passed to children's social care, advice and information provided or cases diverted to early intervention. Multi agency audits are completed to review cases that have not progressed from contact to referral to scrutinize decision making. The outcome of these audits is fed into the MASH Partnership Forum.

The weekly performance report provides details of all strategy meetings, s47s, and Child and Family Assessments. The reports provide information on timeliness and outcomes. Staff performance is recorded and challenged if required. The Monthly Information Booklet provides information regarding trends, challenges and volume within the service and what is working well.

Social work practice in the MASH and Assessment Service is monitored through management oversight. Every MASH record, Children and Family Assessment, and s47 is signed off by a manager. Challenge of threshold is used as a learning mechanism both in supervision, team discussions, group supervision and multi-agency performance meetings. The data evidences that personal supervision within MASH and the Assessment Teams is at 100% and case supervision is 91.66%.

EDT have operational processes and procedures in place which ensures a high level of performance out of hours. Quarterly monitoring meetings take place to provide scrutiny of the service provided.

In April 2020 A Child Exploitation audit was completed. 50% were seen as good and 50% required improvement. Some areas of strength were, clear management oversight on all cases, relevant consideration of historical information was given. Areas for development were, The CE tool was not used by the referrer and some of the case had not been signed off within 24 hours.

In April 2020 a deep dive neglect audit was completed. The findings were that no plans were seen as inadequate. 44% Good. No assessments were inadequate.

92% visits good or RI (44% good). Management oversight (19% good, 63% RI, 19% inadequate). The Graded Care Profile 2 has not been routinely used. Actions from this audit was for a bi monthly learning event regarding neglect took place on 1st and 3rd June 20. There is a clear request from the Safeguarding Partnership of when the GCP2 is initiated.

In April 2020, a pre-birth assessment audit was completed. 1 was good, 2 were requires improvement and 5 were inadequate. An area of strength was Assessment plans identified by Team Managers at the beginning of the assessment are clear and of good quality. To address this the actions were that an immediate review was undertaken of all inadequate rated cases to identify if immediate safeguarding action was necessary. All pre-birth cases that were closed with no further action from January 2020 until May 2020 were reviewed. Senior Practitioners to deliver guidance and training around use of the pre-birth handbook. A re-audit of pre-birth assessments will take place in October 2020.

In June 2020 a thematic audit was completed looking at re referrals into MASH. 1 was good, 5 required improvement and 1 was inadequate. Areas of strength were, Early Help support was offered to families in 6 of 8 cases, indicating that this support is being routinely offered. In cases where further assessment had been declined by parents, there is evidence of staff within the assessment teams adapting their approach in an attempt to engage parents while at the same time respecting their decision to decline assessment. In 5 case examples, re-referrals were for concerns of the same nature as the previous referral. This may indicate that concerns had not been sufficiently explored within the preceding child and family assessment, or alternatively that referrers are reluctant to hold their concerns below level 4 despite previous assessment.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The MASH works to a well-established multi-agency model.
2. There are experienced social workers collating information from partner agencies to provide clear recommendations and defensible decisions.
3. Good responses to immediate harm to children between Police, social services and our multi-agency partners.
4. Strong threshold decision-making with good impact of social work and early intervention services.
5. Monthly case audits are undertaken across the management structure and recommendations put in place
6. The Domestic Abuse Hub is embedded and plans put in place to enhance.
7. Regular supervision is taking place and recorded. HoS has observed supervisions to ensure quality of supervision provided.
8. Audit activity is evidencing that improvements have been made.
9. Caseloads are low and consistent
10. Development of Child in Need work with the support from Family Support Workers within the Assessment Teams to ensure all children and families will receive the right services at the right time dependent upon the level of need. Family Support Workers will provide direct work with Children and families. Children's views

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. We will explore options for best retaining social workers within the MASH and Assessment teams. This is ongoing. Workers, children and their families will benefit from the consistency of experienced and permanent Social Workers.
2. Contacts to be completed within 24 hours. Additional Social Work capacity has been put in place with immediate effect.
3. Development of the Early Help Hub will improve the timeliness of contacts being completed which will provide children and their families with the most appropriate support and safeguards. The target was 1st June 20 but this will not be implemented until September 2020.
4. Work with partners to reduce the level of inappropriate Multi Agency Referral Forms. Monthly performance meetings with partner agencies will continue. This scrutinizes the quality of Multi Agency Referral Forms, the quality of work within the MASH, decision making and timeliness of contacts. Findings are presented to the MASH Partnership Forum.
5. 100% case supervisions recorded within 3 months by end of Q2. HoS will observe 2 supervisions by 30th September 20.
6. Senior Practitioners will provide reflective supervision individually and within a group. This will improve practice to be completed by end of Q2.

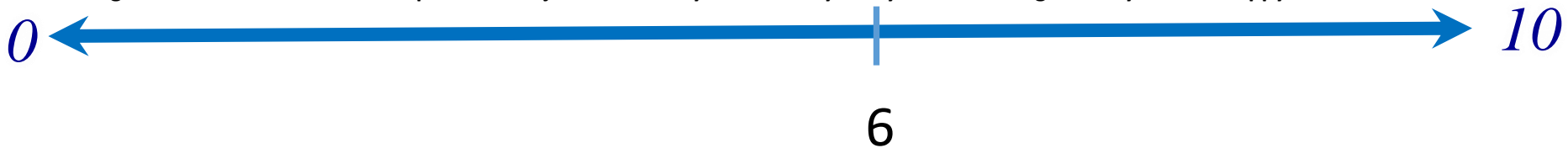
wishes and feelings will be heard and support provided to reduce the need for children to move to alternate accommodation-Family Support Workers have been recruited and trained.

- 11. Child in Need guidance has been reviewed and updated with clear expectations

- 7. Thematic audits will be completed. Child Exploitation May 20, Pre-birth Assessments April 20.
- 8. Completion of strategy meetings, s47's, Child and Family Assessments to meet targets of 95% within timescales. – HoS and Team Managers will drive forward the consistency of the work being completed. This will ensure the safety of children and that the appropriate support is provided-It was hoped that consistency would be seen by the end of Q1 however this still needs to be completed and consistency will be seen by the end of Q2.
- 9. The Child in Need Guidance needs to be embedded within the teams. We will evidence that it is being evidenced and that it is producing positive impact for the children and families.
- 10. Signs of Safety implementation-a multi-agency approach to working with children, young people and their families to identify and manage needs, risks and family strengths where children are in need of help and protection. Some training has taken place but further training has been delayed due to COVID-19.
- 11. Embed the learning culture. Thematic audits will continue for MASH and the Assessment Teams. The learning from the audits will be shared by way of reflective workshops, supervision with the Social Worker and Managers and support from the Academy. Social Workers will have support from Senior Practitioners within the teams. Evidence of improved practice will be seen through further audit activity through Q2

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**Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that MASH and Assessment practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.**



**Summary: Safeguarding and Review (Barb Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review)****What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The restrictions arising from Covid-19 meant that since the end of March, in line with many other local authorities, all Looked After Children Reviews and Child Protection Conferences have been conducted via video conferencing. Every effort has been made to ensure children and parents can be fully involved within Webex video based Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children Reviews, with invitations sent via email and phone to participants who can access meetings by laptop, tablet and smart phones. Where parents / carers do not have access to these they are supported by the child's social worker / fostering social worker in person to access the meeting with the social worker via the webex link. Although there have been some technical issues due to broadband capacity, getting used to the new technology has been relatively straightforward for many parents, children and partner agencies. Where there are difficulties, IROs/Conference Chairs ensure there are preparatory and follow up telephone calls to support child and parent contribution.

Due to the same restrictions, IRO Consultations with children prior to Looked After Children Reviews are also conducted via video calls or telephone calls. It is of concern that the most vulnerable of parents and children are impacted by the challenges of participating through technology and supporting arrangements to have limited participants in face to face socially distanced meetings with video conference input from other agencies / individuals will be progressed in quarter 2. While there is no current travelling time, IROs are reporting that Looked After Children Reviews and Child Protection Conferences are taking significantly longer in preparation conversations and in the meetings themselves, so there is no significant time saving from the new arrangements.

A significant area of improvement in quarter one which has had a direct impact on children and young people is securing long term matches with foster carers, with a significant amount of work being undertaken by IROs escalating informally and formally and Social Workers from the Looked After Children and Fostering Teams subsequently addressing previous drift. There has been a shift in culture from the perception that a matching assessment is for the foster carer and only when the match is all but agreed, to being an assessment for the child to evaluate if matching between this child and this carer is right, what support would need to be in Looked After Children to make it right, and if not right recommendations for future planning to progress the care plan of a long term foster placement or if a change of plan is required

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Performance indicators for the first quarter show a significant drop in CP plans being completed and distributed within timescales. Interrogation of CP cases has identified that apart from two cases where plans were delayed due to the chair having special leave due to bereavement, the CP plan arising from the conference was completed within 3 days (and therefore within the 5 day timescale). However, this was not copied over to the siblings' files in some cases and the request to business support to distribute the plans was not sent. This is a process issue and all Conference Chairs have been reminded to complete these actions. Some of this is down to a new starter getting to grips with the process and therefore an area where being in physical proximity with

colleagues would have enabled reminders about process knowledge and practice to be shared by colleagues; part of picking up the daily practice of a team. In response to this the Principal IRO has been requested to set aside time in each virtual team meeting to go over the basics of process and provide opportunity for any questions to be explored and schedule in a face to face team meeting in late August / early September (restrictions permitting).

A second area identified in the Monthly Information Booklet for the 1st Quarter as a reduction in performance is that of IRO oversights between Looked After Children Reviews down to 75%. However, the data sent on a weekly basis, which identifies each case and date of IRO oversight, showed at 30.06.20 that 96% of cases had two or more IRO oversights in the last twelve months, a very positive figure and improvement on good performance last year. Only one child who had been Looked After for more than four months had less than two oversights.

This direct data has been checked as accurate and is therefore the one reported within the PI section and the discrepancy is being raised with Mosaic reporting. All other areas are either maintaining good performance or making significant improvements in poorer performing areas from 2019/20.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Informal and formal Dispute Resolutions (6 formal DRs relating to this area in quarter one) addressed long term matching drift: Of the 70 children identified with a plan of long term fostering but not yet matched who were under 17 and a half years of age, 24 have now been matched with their carers. The remainder have either not been in a placement for 12 months and have dates set for the completion of the matching assessment or have had their plan changed to SGO applications or a return to parental care and two are to be submitted to fostering panel with IRO review of progress on 01.08.20 for formal dispute resolution if required.
2. Timeliness of Looked After Children review minutes and recommendations is improving, with Year to date at end of June increasing from 68% (end of 19/20) to 82% and from 77% (end of 19/20) to 82% respectively.
3. IRO oversights between Looked After Children Reviews (minimum of 2 within a 12 month period) have increased from 88% to 96%, with only one child Looked After for more than 4 months having only one oversight and no children Looked After for more than 4 months having none - this from a total of 349 children. This evidences IROs recording their continuous monitoring of progression of care plans and actions to promote the welfare of all Looked After Children.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

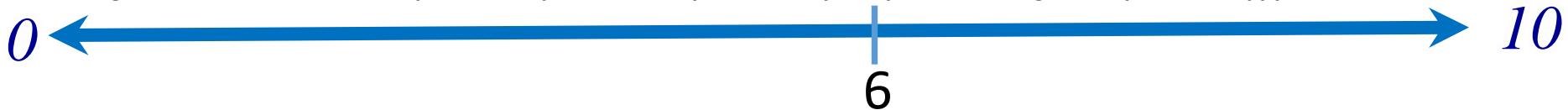
1. Ensuring outcomes for children are linked to agreed work with families. Performance in completing and distributing CP plans dropped, the reasons for which are covered above. This is largely a process issue in copying to sibling files and sending 'request to distribute' and is being addressed as above, by mid-September 2020.
2. Improving the quality of Looked After Children review minutes written in the form of letters to the child. These need to incorporate recording parental views appropriately and focus on how the style has relevance to the child as well as covering statutorily required areas. There is potential to use the letter to the child at the 1st Looked After Children Review as the beginning of life story work - equally there needs to be a formal account appropriate for consideration in court proceedings. The Principal IRO will address this within individual supervisions with the IROs and undertake quality auditing in September 2020.
3. Parental participation in CP and Care Planning needs to be further promoted to support parents who have difficulties in contributing through virtual meetings and those parents who have previously found engagement difficult. Use of hybrid meetings - physical meetings for the Chair / IRO, Social Worker, parents and parental support / advocate, with input through video conference from agencies and carers, is being progressed with the aim these can begin by September 2020 (depending on local and national Covid-19 guidance).

4. Implementation of Signs of Safety continues to progress with a programme of weekly group supervision for Conference Chairs / IROs scheduled to cover 9 topics from 08.08.20 to 14.10.20.
5. Increased use of formal dispute resolutions: Qtr 1 = 29, compared with 17 dispute resolutions for the year 2019/20. These covered Delegated Authority, completion of Care Plans and Pathway Plans for Looked After Children Reviews and the completion of Matching assessments.

4. SMART Child Protection Plans require further development, with this being progressed through the 9 sessions of group supervision on Signs of Safety in August and September.
5. Distribution of Looked After Review minutes is improving but remains too slow. Minutes are not distributed until the hand written attendance sheet is attached, a measure previously introduced three years ago to ensure no minutes were sent to the wrong address but this delays distribution significantly. Proposal that the invite list, amended with a tick box to confirm the address is current by the social worker, to be used for distribution of minutes by business support - these will mainly be email addresses for the webex meetings. Parents / carers without email to be asked to confirm postal address when telephoning into meeting or consulted by IRO. Postal invites to CP Conferences / Looked After Children Reviews for parents who do not have an email address and who have not been in recent contact to include information that if their postal address is not confirmed as up to date they will not automatically be sent minutes due to data protection and will need to contact the child's social worker to request a copy of the minutes by confirming a current address. This to be operational by 01.09.20.

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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that MASH and Assessment practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: Child Protection & Court Service (Cath Thomas – Head of CP and Court)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

Compliance with statutory timescales and tasks has significantly improved in the past 6 months and this has been not only maintained but has continued to improve in Q1. With a more stable workforce and lower caseloads we are now starting to see improvements in the quality of practice. Practitioners and their managers have more time to pause and plan, reflect and to undertake quality direct work with children and families.

Case recording is becoming increasingly more reliable, from social workers and managers. In Q1 we are starting to see a positive cultural shift as the staff group learns and reflects together and supports and challenges each other. Individual and group learning and reflection is becoming part of everyday practice.

The improvements in performance data have improved morale, and coupled with a genuine enthusiasm and energy around Signs of Safety and a positive learning environment, staff appear more confident to share their best practice, try out new things, and learn together and we now have a good proportion of our fortnightly service meeting dedicated to this. We have adopted an Appreciative Inquiry approach to service development during Q4 19/20 and Q1 20/21 and this has enabled staff at all levels to contribute to driving forward improvements in the service and to feel part of something they can really be proud of.

Audits are increasingly evidencing good practice and the learning from all audit activity is effectively shared. Evidence of this being quickly acted upon and applied to all cases however is more limited and there are some core aspects where progress is being made but the pace of change is too slow.

Staff morale is significantly impacted on currently as a result of remote working arrangements and we quickly need a resolution for teams to have regular time to come together, particularly given the inexperience within the staff group, including 9 ASYEs and 3 students.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Performance indicators contained within this service plan evidence many areas of good performance which has improved significantly during Q4 19/20 and has continued to improve and maintain during Q1 20/21. Key highlights are: 100% posts filled; 100% personal supervision; 97% case supervision; CIN, CP and Looked after Children visits 90%, 92% and 96% respectively; no audits rated 'inadequate' (April 20 thematic audit). There were no outstanding audit actions in the service at the end of Q1.

A small number of SWs had more than 20 cases and more than 16 cases at the end of Q1. Case summaries and delegated authority are longstanding issues that are now being progressed but too slowly - at the end of Q1 77% of cases had an up to date case summary and 88% of children in care had a delegated authority recorded. Performance in the timeliness of strategy meetings has recently improved but now needs to be maintained - 100% at the end of Q1. the service have very few s47 investigations and C&F assessments which leads the performance data to be 'spiky', however in Q2 we will be working to ensure that timescales for these pieces of work are being met consistently.

All teams are now holding regular group supervisions and the team managers have all received training in Signs of Safety group supervision. Staff are now more consistently accessing formal learning opportunities provided by the Academy and others such as ACE. We have 2 senior practitioners enrolling on the PSDP supervision course for September and 3 SWs seeking to start their Practice Educator Level 1 course.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Positive learning culture and collaborative service development, evidenced by regular learning and sharing best practice focus at service meetings; same approach in team meetings; whole service engagement in Appreciative Inquiry approach.
2. Performance in case supervision and personal supervision means staff are well supported and have regular opportunities to discuss cases.
3. Culture of compliance with statutory timescales and tasks has improved and is embedding with less direct intervention from HoS.
4. Workforce stability is improving including recruitment of permanent staff and 3 permanent senior practitioners are in post and have lower caseloads.
5. Improved quality of practice and timeliness in PLO and a clear focus on planning for permanence for children outside of care.
6. Family support workers now sit within social work teams and managers report that their work is more responsive and targeted as a result.
7. Positive response and commitment to embedding approach to permanence planning for children outside of care, foundations in place and will continue to strengthen with additional FSW resource currently being recruited.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Embedding use of Genopro and the Family Network Assessment Record to ensure timely and appropriate decision making for children in PLO and care proceedings Q2
2. Further training to be delivered by ACE in relation to completion of CPRs and FTA to ensure SWs are skilled and knowledgeable in adoption planning - Q2/Q3
3. All cases to have an up to date case summary aligned with the case supervision cycle and develop practice standards - by 30th Sept.
4. Develop and refine performance data for CIN reviews and core groups - Q2/Q3 dependent upon performance team capacity.
5. Further develop shared reporting via Mosaic and / or trackers for cases in PLO and care proceedings - Q2.



Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 that child protection and court practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy



**Summary: Looked After Children Service (Gill Cox – Head of Looked After Children)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 1 there were 345 children in care which equates to 96 per 10,000, which is significantly higher than the national average (64 per 10,000) and that of statistical neighbours (53 per 10,000). The number of looked after children has been fairly stable over recent months but has reduced slightly during the quarter.

Care orders have been discharged for 7 children in the looked after children teams in this quarter - 2 children were reunified and 5 children became subject to SGO's. At the end of the quarter a further 31 applications are filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the looked after children system.

There are 18 SGO applications and 7 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are 3 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications with legal services to be prepared for issue. 19 children have been formally long-term matched with more assessments completed ready for formal decisions in July.

Life story books and later life letters have been completed for 35 children who have been adopted. At the end of June there were 12 adopted children waiting for these pieces of work and all will be completed by the end of August.

Arrangements for family time for children and young people was completed virtually during the Covid "lockdown". During July and August it is a priority to review all family time arrangements that were being supervised within our contact centre so that we ensure that all children and young people who could have unsupervised family time or be supervised by a family member or foster carer have the benefit of this.

The Virtual School in the Education and Commissioning Directorate is a strong and stable team that supports the education of looked after children and previously looked after children. The team feels that social workers and schools value the work they do; feedback from both is positive. One social worker

has recently stated “in my time in Hereford I have never met more dedicated, passionate or hard working professionals for looked after children! they do their absolute best with every case I have come across and they know each case inside out”.

There are close links between the Virtual School team and the CWD, looked after children team and 16+ teams. The links with the CP Court teams and Assessment teams is improving. Because the Virtual School team have taken the responsibility of organizing and chairing the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings for the last 9 years there can be occasions when social workers and their managers do not prioritise attendance at PEP meetings, knowing that a member of staff from the Virtual School will attend.

The Virtual School team feels strongly that social workers (especially in the CWD and Looked after Children teams) know their children well and are passionate about getting good outcomes for them.

The Virtual School piloted a project (SEEdS) to support school stability since January 2019. This has mainly been through Multi-Element Planning Meetings (PEP+) and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). The input from social workers at the PEP+ meetings has been very good. The first year evaluation demonstrated that 41 children were supported directly, 17% in out of authority placements. 100% of the participants felt the experience was positive. 50 foster carers were also provided with training through the project. The project has now moved into a second year.

#### Corporate Parenting

The Corporate Parenting strategy has driven improvement with much achieved since it was agreed. All elected members attended Corporate Parenting training as a mandatory part of their induction training and during this made a personal offer of support to Looked After Children and care leavers which now provides a directory of interests and skills that the Service can call on. The training was developed jointly with Your Voice Matters (YVM), our children in care council, and was co-delivered with them.

Corporate Parenting panel meets bi-monthly and has a work plan for the year based on the priorities within the strategy.

Work is underway to refresh the Corporate Parenting strategy which will be presented to Cabinet in September 2020.

YVM meet monthly and are active members of the Corporate Parenting panel. They meet monthly themselves and are involved in recruitment for all Social Worker and Personal Advisor posts within the service. It is acknowledged that further work is required to ensure that children in care and care leavers are able to contribute and affect change at a service level.

#### **How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Audit completed on the theme of child exploitation in May. Of the 7 cases audited 3 were assessed as "good" and 4 as "requires improvement".

Compliments for LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN teams - "J was very anxious for some time before this FaceTime, but you read her so beautifully when you spoke with her on the phone and before the contact. She felt very safe and you were spot on with how to deal with her" and the foster carers “have shared that E

would not open up to her previous social workers. E was very closed down in relation to speaking about her wishes and feelings, however Nita has been amazing at forming a positive relationship with E; she has got alongside E, (played on the trampoline for example). M and D have shared that Nita's work has been very effective, E is now much more willing and able to talk about her wishes and feelings, the whole family will miss Nita very much."

Feedback from the parent of a child in care "Thank you for being the type of social worker you are, you have helped so much and I know at times we have both been difficult. I really am looking forward to the next chapter and moving forward."

**Areas of strength, evidence**

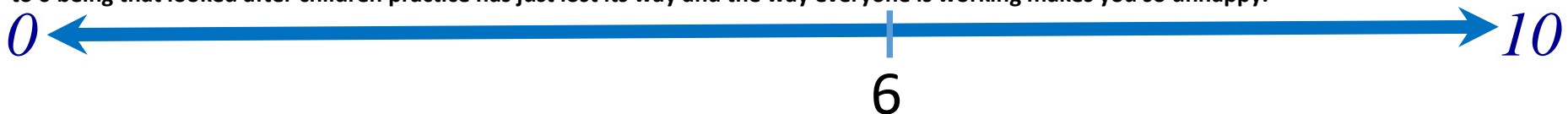
1. Audit found evidence in most cases that in case supervision progression of planning is discussed, with actions reviewed and new actions set
2. audit found in all cases, the young person is being visited as regularly as is needed, and case files evidence a clear sense of their lived experience;
3. Good progress in reducing looked after numbers with 7 children who had their care orders discharged during Q1 and a further 31 applications prepared
4. Good progress with increasing number of children who are long-term matched with 19 long term matches approved during Q1
5. Good progress in reducing backlog of lifestory work and later life letters with 35 completed during Q1
6. Case supervision target was met
7. Visit targets were met

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Continue work to reduce numbers of children in care with expectation that a further 12 applications will be completed during Quarter 2 - 9 for SGO and 5 discharge following successful reunification;
2. complete at least 12 long-term matches by end of August
3. review arrangements for family time and establish safe plan for all children and young people outside of the contact centre wherever possible
4. Ensure that the elimination of the backlog of life story books and later life letters for children who have been adopted is maintained
5. Ensure all children in care have an up to date delegated authority form
6. Ensure all children in care have an up to date case summary

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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that looked after children practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: Care Leavers Service (Gill Cox – Head of Looked After Children)****What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The 16+ team has had a significant change in Social Workers and has 2 full-time vacancies that are filled by agency workers at the end of the quarter but have been vacant for periods during the quarter. In addition to long-term absence of another Social Worker and the remaining Social Workers both being ASYE's this has impacted upon performance and service delivery during quarter 1.

Visits are not yet consistently completed within timescales and not all cases have been supervised during this 3 month period. The team worked hard to update Pathway plans for all looked after children and the focus now is on ensuring they are all reviewed within timescale improving from the current low base to achieve a target of 95% by December 2020.

Performance of the team has improved during 2019/20 with those in touch and in suitable accommodation being as good or better than statistical neighbours. The number of young people engaged with education, training or employment has improved significantly and focus now needs to be on sustaining this as the impact of Covid is felt.

Audit programme has shown improvement in quality of practice although further improvement is required. The team are more knowledgeable in working with liberty safeguards enabling them to take a more proactive approach in safeguarding young people; are more experienced in working with young people at risk of exploitation and in challenging risk averse cultures within the service and across multi-agency partners which has successfully enabled some young people to be reunified within their families

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

In April an audit of 16+ cases was completed on the theme of exploitation. 7 cases were audited with 1 assessed as "good" and 6 assessed as "requires improvement".

Compliments from young people "Hey I don't really now how to tell you but I would like to say a massive thank you to all your team for supporting me and never giving up. I know that I have been a pain with all my running episodes I have done. I am very grateful for all you help and support. I would like to give a first shout out to Fran for never giving up on me and getting here to this point because if I didn't have here I wouldn't of made it without her. Then you got Steph, Andrea and Stacie for just giving me so much advice even though sometimes I didn't take it but you have all been amazing..."

"Whilst in care I got taught a lot of life skills, got involved in participation with a lovely lady and we do all sorts of activities! We go and speak in big groups of people, give our voice etc. When we are ready to move out they help us with how to sort bills out, and help us buy things. They help us whilst learning to drive by paying some of those lessons for us. They're always at the end of the phone, I'd be dead without the help of my PA, and my former social worker.

They do an amazing job, people just don't see that side of it. To all social workers/PA's etc out there as someone who's been in care I'm proud to say you've been the ones to make me who I am today! 😊"

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Team are in touch with more care leavers than statistical neighbours;
2. More care leavers are in suitable accommodation than statistical neighbours;
3. Number of care leavers in education, training and employment is higher than statistical neighbours;
4. audits show that the quality of practice is improving; S47's are being completed to timescale;
5. new accommodation for care leavers with complex needs is due to open week commencing 13th July 2020;
6. more young people are "staying put" providing stability for young people;
7. two Social Work apprentices appointed from existing personal advisors who are keen to work in the 16+ team when they qualify.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Statutory visits and visits to care leavers need to be completed in timescale consistently;
2. case supervision needs to be completed on all cases at least every 3 months;
3. pathway plans need to be completed and reviewed within timescales;
4. quality of pathway plans needs to improve; chronologies need to be up to date;
5. case summaries need to be updated at least every 3 months and all young people need an up to date delegated authority completed; using Signs of Safety approach with young people to help them engage in their wellbeing/safety goals via their pathway plan and reduce risky behaviours;
6. improve the timeliness of discharge of care orders when young people have returned home or applications for SGO;
7. improve approach to building stronger support networks around young people by improving staff's confidence to hold family network meetings and devising support plans for care experienced young people; offering workshops in relation to tenancy management,
8. budgeting, emotional wellbeing in conjunction with partner agencies such as housing solutions, strong young minds, children's finance and preparing for independence;
9. reduce the number of young people at risk of exploitation and provide accommodation options that enable young people to live within their local community

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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being care leaver practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: CWD Service (Les Knight – Head of Additional Needs)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The ILACS inspection in June 2018 recognised that the quality of help and protection offered to children by the disabled children's team is a strength. It observed that workers know the children they are working with very well and they ensure that children's views are evident in their reviews and assessments. A recent internal focussed audit on 'the child's voice' also viewed this in a positive light.

The Ofsted focussed visit (Dec 2019) confirmed that CIN plans are tailored and responsive to children's needs. Packages of support are appropriate to needs identified and social workers are quick to ensure these are adapted if children's needs change or in response to crisis. Children's and carers views are consistently recorded and influence planning. Social workers know the children well and are skilled at communication with children using a variety of different methods and applying observational skills to ascertain children's wellbeing. Supervision is qualitatively better in this team, is well recorded and includes elements of reflection helping to ensure timely progress.

The Children with Disabilities (CWD) Team has been part of a 0-25 multi-disciplinary SEND service which has seen the CWD and SEN Assessment Team co-located since 2016. This has improved communication and joint working between the teams. Families requesting a statutory Education, Health & Care (EHC) assessment are now screened using an Early Help Screening Tool to establish whether there are any unmet care needs, which should improve the quality of the care advice into EHC Plans and ensure families get the appropriate support.

The CWD Team is fully staffed with permanent staff and has appropriate caseloads. The team is rapidly gaining experience having recruited the majority of its staff as newly qualified workers 2-3 years ago. The team receives regular positive feedback on the quality of its work from IROs, the legal team and education staff.

The ILACS inspection report also commented on strong and effective work with partner agencies (which) results in effective support to children and their families. Most of the team's referrals come via the multi-agency Single Point of Referral team which the team attends. Working relationships are strong with the transition team in adult well-being and the revised transition protocol describes expectations for cases transferring.

The Ofsted Joint Local Area SEND Inspection was undertaken in September 2016. No written statement of action resulted and inspectors commented that the local area has clear procedures in place to check that children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are safe. They also commented that leaders 'have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different partners who contribute to the implementation of the [2014 Children and Family Act] reforms'.

There is some further learning for the team around the Mental Capacity Act, Deprivation of Liberty and Liberty Protection Safeguards. The team has undertaken training from The Edge Training, a national leader in this area of work and one of the team has recently been trained to be a 'Best Interests' Assessor. However, recent cases in the Court of Protection have highlighted further learning is required.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Weekly and monthly performance reports are shared with Head of Service, Team Manager and the Director. These include CWD specific performance information. Performance concerns are addressed through supervision and are intended to be proactive rather than just reactive comment when performance has slipped. Feedback from HOS/AD Performance meetings

Team Managers sign all assessments. Court documentation is subject to Team Manager and Head of Service Quality Assurance.

All Staff are supervised in line with the corporate supervision timescales

Audits have been undertaken through the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and internal audit arrangements. Internal audit processes include auditors reviewing the case with the worker involved to promote learning and developing a shared view of a case. Processes for the administration of short breaks and direct payments have been reviewed as part of the corporate internal audit programme (SWAP). The findings from these audit processes have been shared with the team.

Learning from complaints and Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) findings/recommendations as well from court cases.

Views of parent/carers and the child is recorded on most workflow forms. Information is also gathered from the local parent carer forum including at the 6 monthly SEND Summits.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The safeguarding of children with disabilities is a strength with timely and planned responses to individual cases. Regular supervision and the trackers used across children's social care ensures that cases do not drift.
2. The use of short breaks and direct payments has developed with families reporting that this is no longer an area of concern. The graduated use of short breaks supports families in a timely way and ultimately prevents some families breaking down.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Developing much greater consistency and focus around performance measures, e.g. visits within timescale.
2. Further work on the criteria and internal thresholds for the team (particularly around autism and mental health) to achieve clarity for referrers.
3. The development of a 'CWD Specific' training programme in conjunction with the principal Social Worker and the Social Work Academy.

<p>3. An experienced team of specialist disability support workers deliver a proportionate response to families with lower levels of need. The use of S2 CSDA 1970 allows support to be delivered without the need for a social worker being involved. Reviewing of these cases is via the EHCP Review offering a family a 'single plan' and review mechanism.</p> <p>4. Staffing stability and a strong team ethos supports team members to deliver a good service to clients.</p>	<p>4. Developing a greater understanding of the Mental Capacity, DOLs and LPS across all social workers in the team.</p> <p>5. To further develop 'working together' arrangements through the HSCB in order to improve improved understanding of roles and responsibilities within the system. Multi-agency working together includes ensuring that the team meets its responsibilities outlined in the updated Preparing for Adulthood Protocol.</p>
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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being children with disabilities practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: Children and Families Performance team**

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

**Quality**

- Timely, regular reports are being produced and distributed to appropriate colleagues in children's' services.
- Accurate data is being produced and distributed.
- Performance analysts aligned with teams to ensure that their reporting needs are met and that queries on accuracy of data are resolved.
- Performance team lead attending monthly AD/HoS meetings to keep informed/up-to-date with the service and to respond to and get feedback on the reporting.
- Annex A/ChAT tool updated weekly and distributed monthly.

**Impact**

- Informs improvement plans. The Heads of Service have an accurate picture of their service area to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Enables measurement of performance against targets and regional and national data in key areas.
- Gives each service area clear quantitative picture of where performing well and where improvements are needed.
- Embedded analysis of performance as business as usual.
- Regular reporting can now identify trends within the service, which helps to measure the impact on children of decisions made.



- Helped to established Herefordshire on a regional basis as an organisation that wants to work with others to improve outcomes for children.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**
**Quality**

- Work/Reports are sensed checked before they are distributed. We do not send out any report which we are aware has inaccurate or questionable data.
- Close working with Heads of Service and teams to ensure data is accurate. Heads of service have a key worker in the team who they meet with regularly to discuss the monthly reporting and data to ensure quality of the data.
- Culture of checking any queries about accuracy of data and responding to those queries quickly and efficiently, keeping people informed of progress.
- Reduction in e-mails/queries that reporting is not accurate which indicates and increase in customer satisfaction that the reporting is accurate.

**Impact**

- Performance information provided is being used to measure performance improvement in individual areas and the overall performance in the Children and Families Directorate.
- Increased confidence in accuracy and presentation of information being distributed regionally and nationally.
- Increasing requests for more information to inform practice improvement e.g. requests for performance information for fostering & family support
- Every service area has weekly/monthly information as to measure its performance against key performance indicators e.g. visits/supervision
- Assisting to embed a climate of support and challenge within individual teams, based on accurate performance information.
- Enabling the organisation to measure performance against expected targets. These may be internal targets set by the service or comparisons to other authorities or Government expectations.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Ability to meet core business requirement of producing clear accurate reports (we know this as the visit to Doncaster evidenced Herefordshire data reporting similar to their more established performance reporting)
2. Reporting and outcomes is online with a number of West Midlands colleagues (know this by attendance at West Midlands regional forums)
3. Skilled, stable team (no turnover, proficient SQL programming)

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. To integrate more fully into the service generally; team managers, social workers. This will give a greater understanding of social work practice/challenges. (timescale: April 2020) Progress: Shadowing or teams had been scheduled in for March/April. These will be postponed and rescheduled for June/July (assuming current social distancing restrictions have been lifted)

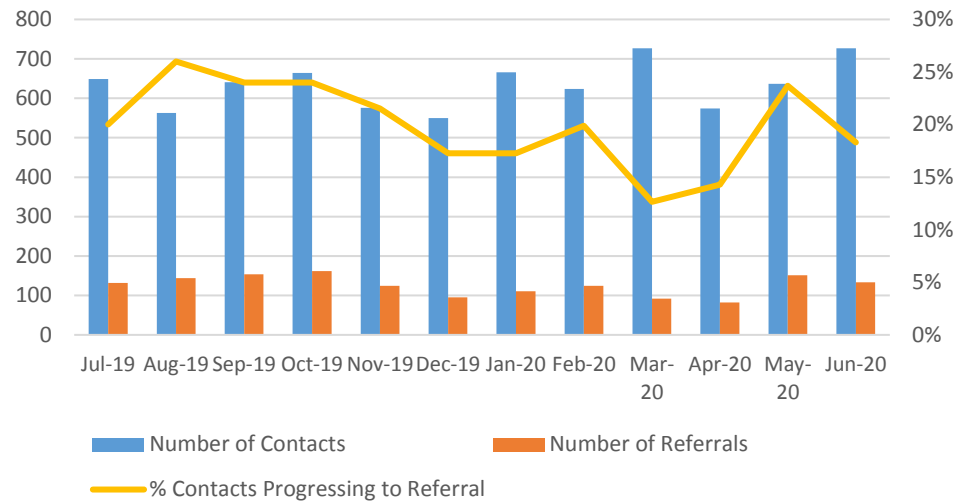
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Establish performance reports for areas of service not yet supplied e.g. family support, child exploitation/missing. (separate improvement plan with detail of all areas for reporting developments and timescales) Progress: CE/missing have now been signed off and regular oversight of reporting and Mosaic developments are now in place.</li> <li>3. Develop team and team culture from reactive to proactive. Identify areas of reporting that could be developed to support the service (timescale: January 2020), create a system for reporting requests that encourages dialogue and collaborative planning of reporting (timescale: January 2020). Progress: this have not been fully achieved in the timescale. New deadline May 2020.</li> <li>4. Integrate more into Children and Families Directorate ethos (e.g. pictures in reports to embed Herefordshire aims/values). Progress: Colour schemes and images are being trialed. (timescale: May 2020)</li> <li>5. Establish a pre-emptive self-service approach to performance indicators to support team managers in managing workers performance improvement of the key areas (e.g. visits due, timeliness of activities).</li> <li>6. Create a 'Performance Team Improvement Plan' to structure the progress and goals of the team in a way that has rigor, challenge and evidence of progress.</li> </ol>
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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that the children and families performance team has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



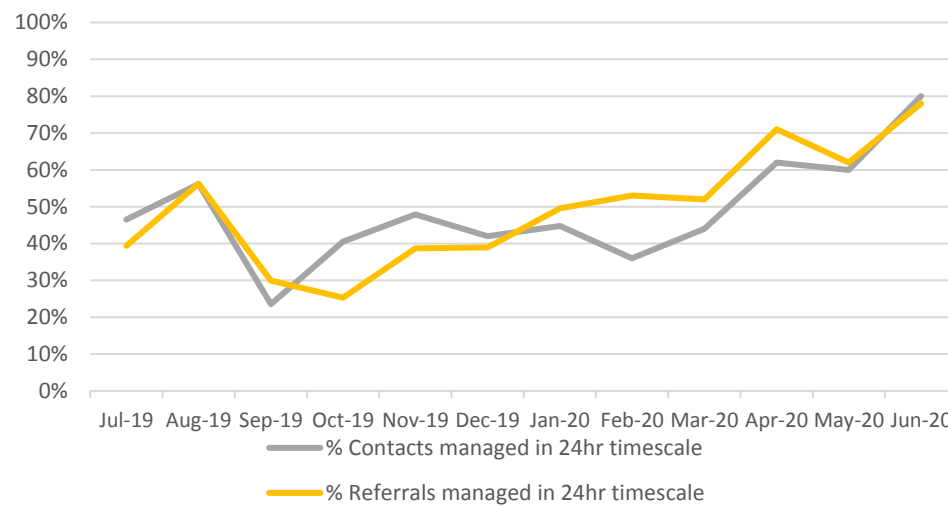
Referrals & Assessment

Contact & Referrals



**Contacts and Referrals:** In June, 18% of contacts progressed to referral. This is a 6% point decrease in progression from last month. The YTD figure is 19%.

Contacts & Referral Management



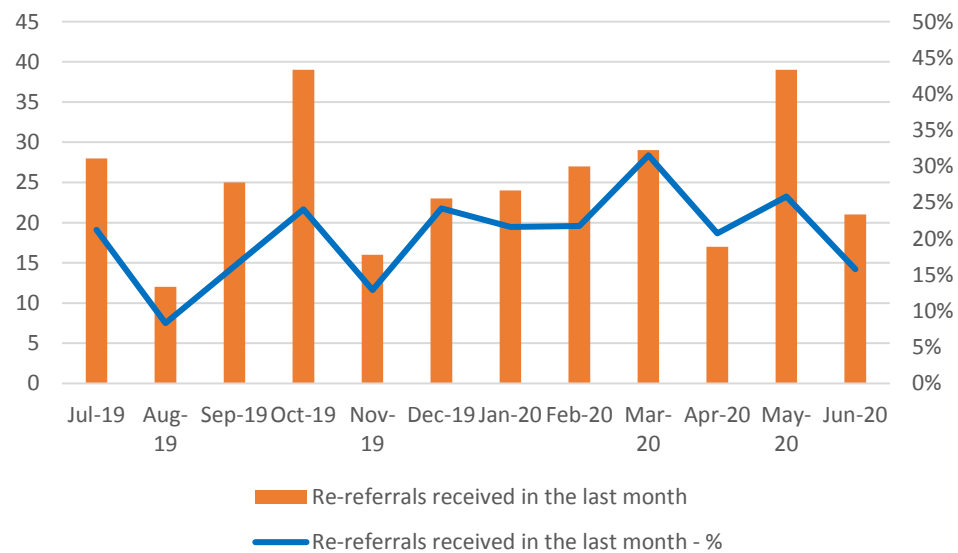
**Contact & Referrals Management:** The above graph shows the proportion of Contacts and Referrals which have been managed in 24hrs timescales.

Contacts managed in 24hrs increased in June to 80% (from 60% in May). Referrals managed in 24hrs increased to 78% (from 62% in May). The year to date % for contacts is 68% and for referrals is 70%.

Source of Contacts and Referrals	Total Contacts	% of Contacts	Total Referrals	% of Referrals	% of Contacts Progressed to Referral
Anonymous	13	1.79%	2	1.50%	15.38%
Education Services	11	1.51%	5	3.76%	45.45%
Health services - A&E (accident and emergency department)	34	4.68%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Health services - General Practitioner (GP)	9	1.24%	6	4.51%	66.67%
Health services - Health Visitor	1	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Health services - Other eg. hospice	7	0.96%	1	0.75%	14.29%
Health services - Other primary health services	54	7.43%	25	18.80%	46.30%
Housing – local authority housing or housing association	1	0.14%	1	0.75%	100.00%
Individual - acquaintance eg. neighbours / child minders	22	3.03%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Individual - family member / relative / carer	21	2.89%	5	3.76%	23.81%
Individual - other Individuals e.g. strangers / MPs	8	1.10%	7	5.26%	87.50%
LA services - social care, for example, from another local authority's adults social care	40	5.50%	21	15.79%	52.50%
Other - including children's centres, independent agency providers or voluntary organisations	18	2.48%	1	0.75%	5.56%
Other Legal Agency - incl. courts, probation, immigration, CAF/CASS or prison	28	3.85%	3	2.26%	10.71%
Police	447	61.49%	49	36.84%	10.96%
Schools	12	1.65%	7	5.26%	58.33%
Unknown	1	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>727</b>		<b>133</b>		<b>18.29%</b>

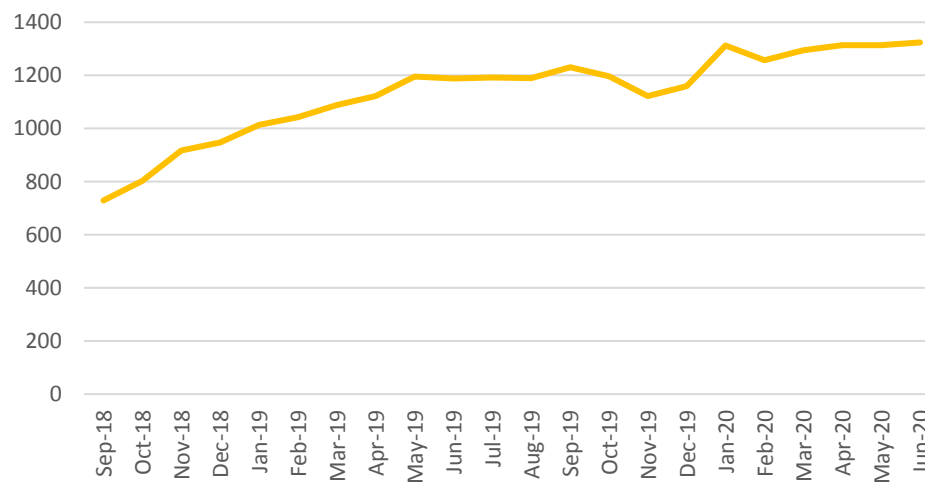
**Contact/Referral by agency:** The table above shows the amount of Contacts and Referrals received during June. As can be seen from this table, the majority of our activity continues to be driven by the Police.

Number of Re-referrals

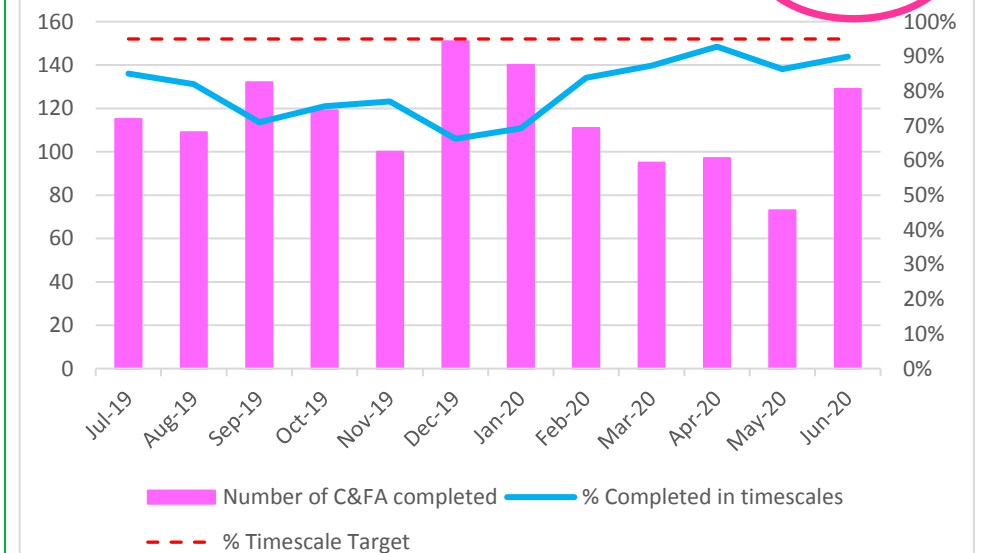


**Early Help Interventions:** As can be seen from the graph below, the number of cases open to Early Help has stabilised in the last few months.

Number of current Early Help Assessments (EHA)



Child & Family Assessments

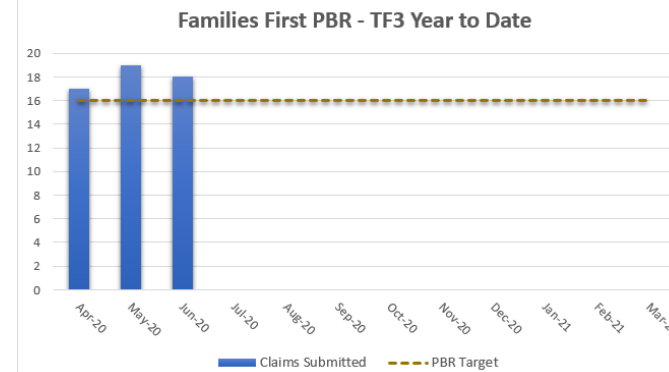


116 out of 129 assessments in time

**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 June was 16%, which is a 10% point decrease from May.

Re-referral % comparison							
Hfd June	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
16%	21%	21%	20%	22%	19%	19%	20%

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



**Families First**

Over the last 12 months, there has been a steady increase in the number of claims submitted. The TF Phase 2 programme ended at the end of March. The graph to the right shows the target for the new TF3 programme which began in April.

**Child & Family Assessments (CAFAs):** In June, the number of CAFAs completed was 129. Of those assessments completed 90% met timescales, this is an increase compared to last month but falls a little short of our 95% target. The YTD position is 90%.

Assessments in timescale % comparison							
Hfd June	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
90%	90%	83%	79%	84%	81%	84%	87%

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

**Incomplete Child & Family Assessments:** As at the end of June, there were 192 assessments awaiting completion. The table below summarises where the incomplete assessments sit.

Team	Total Number awaiting completion	Number beyond 45 days
Assessment 1	47	0
Assessment 2	43	0
Assessment 3	60	0
CP & Court 1	6	0
CP & Court 2	2	1
CP & Court 3	4	1
CWD	16	3
16+	2	0
Other	12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>5 (2.6%)</b>

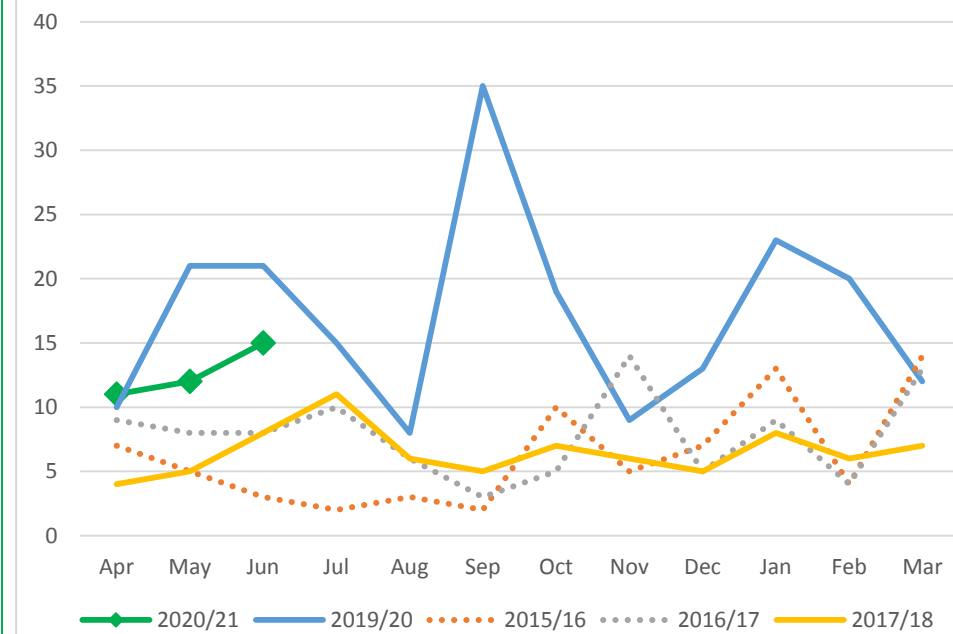
**Outcomes of Child & Family Assessment:** The following shows the outcomes from the C&F assessments completed during the month. Typically, a strategy meeting is called from the contact/referral, rather than the end of the assessment.

Referral Outcome	Assessment Outcome	Count
Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	2
	Continue with current plan	11
	Review Assessment Only	0
	Close Case	14
	No Outcome Recorded Yet	1
	No-Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan
No-Strategy Meeting	Strat	0
	Continue with current plan	20
	Review Assessment Only	0
	Close Case	72

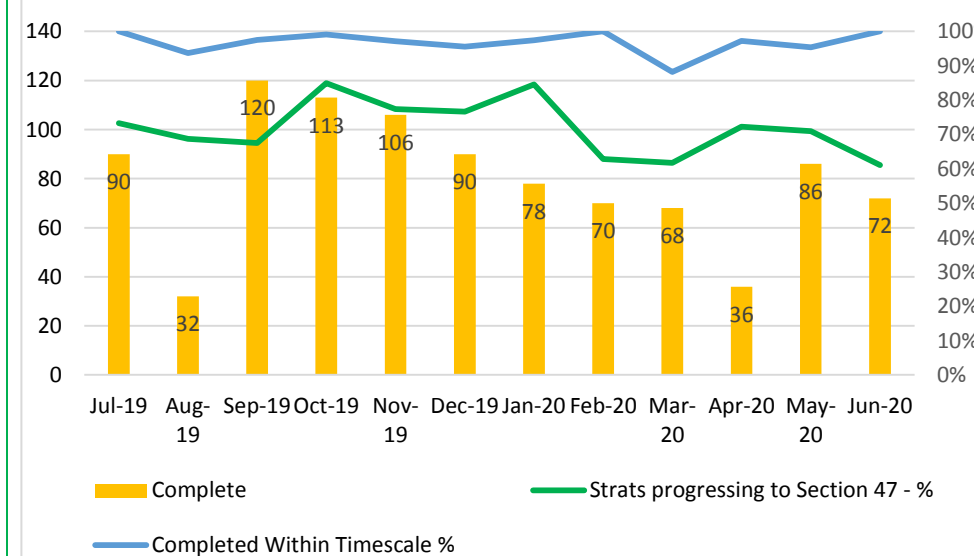
Of the assessments completed in June, it was identified that 67% of cases reported seeing the child within 3 days. This is a 10% point decrease in the level of performance from last month, May, which was 77%.

Team	Total Number completed (June)	Percentage in timescale	Percentage seen in 3 days
Assessment 1	45	84%	58%
Assessment 2	26	88%	88%
Assessment 3	36	100%	69%
CP & Court 1	6	100%	100%
CP & Court 2	3	0%	100%
CWD	2	100%	100%
MASH	1	100%	0%
Unallocated	10	100%	10%
<b>Total all teams</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>67%</b>

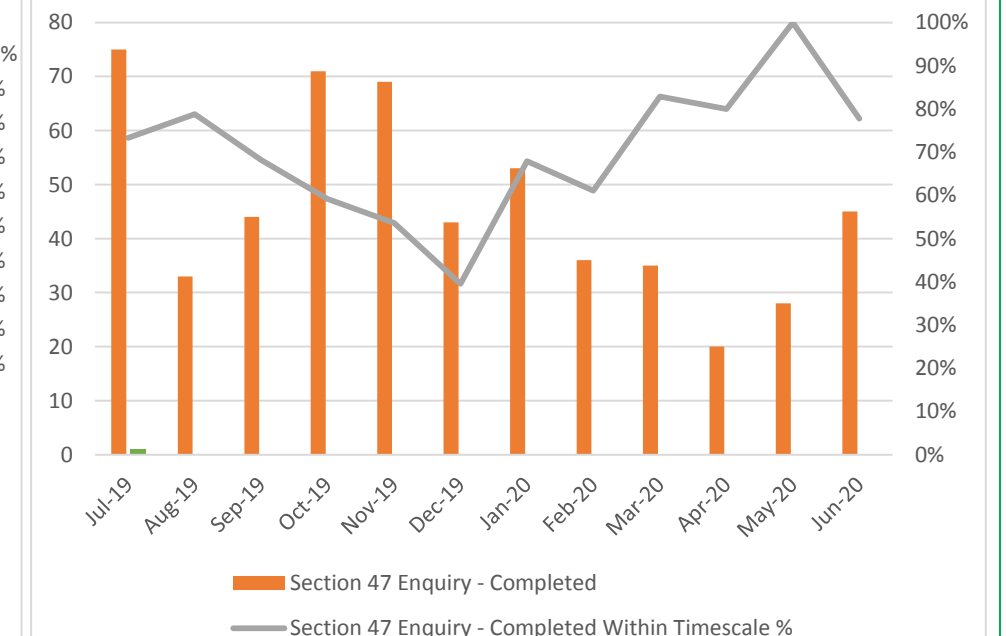
**Number of CE/CSE Assessments**



**Strategy discussions and % Progression to S47**



**Number of Section 47s undertaken**



**CE/CSE Assessments:** During June there were 15 CSE/CE assessments completed.

**Strategy Discussions:** During June, there was a decrease in the number of Strategy Meetings undertaken.

**Section 47s:** There was an increase in the number of Section 47s carried out in June compared to May. 78% of Section 47s were completed in time in June. This is a decrease from May which was 100% in timescales.

100% of strategy discussion were held in time this month.

**Year to date figure is 85% of Section 47 in timescale.**

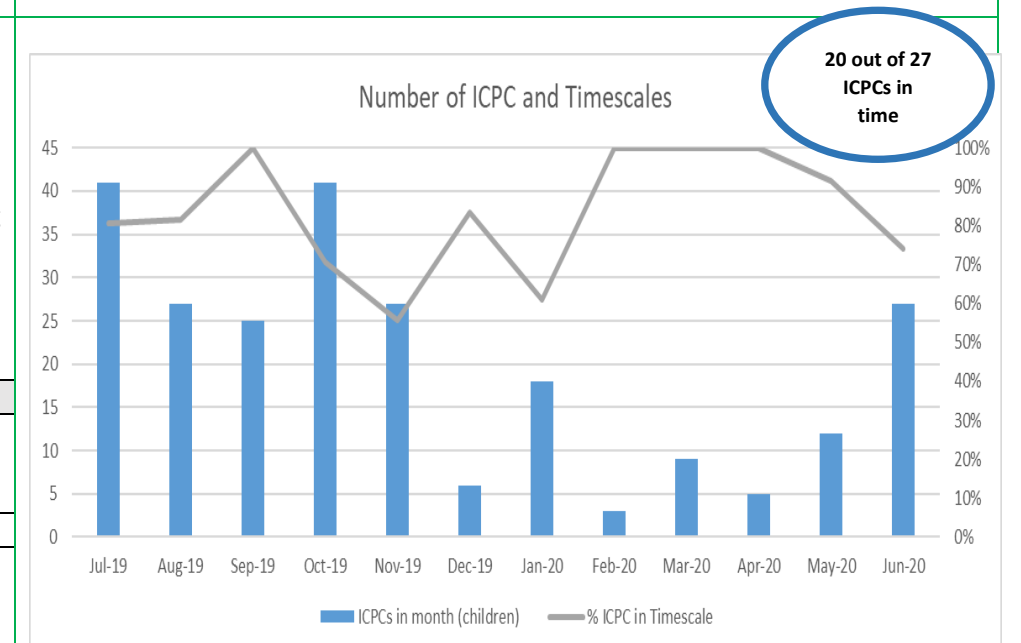
**Year to date timeliness of strategy discussions is 97%.**

The progression of cases to Section 47 during the month was 61% which is a fall compared to May which was 71%.

**Year to date figure is 68% progressing to Section 47.**

**Section 47 Outcomes:**

The graph to the left shows the outcome of those Section 47s started in the period. In June, 38% of Section 47s were NFA'd, 51% were progressed to ICPC, 9% went to Child in Need and 2% was 'not stated'.



**Initial Child Protection Conferences:** In June, performance around ICPC timescales was 74%. 20 out of the 27 ICPCs this month were held in timescale.

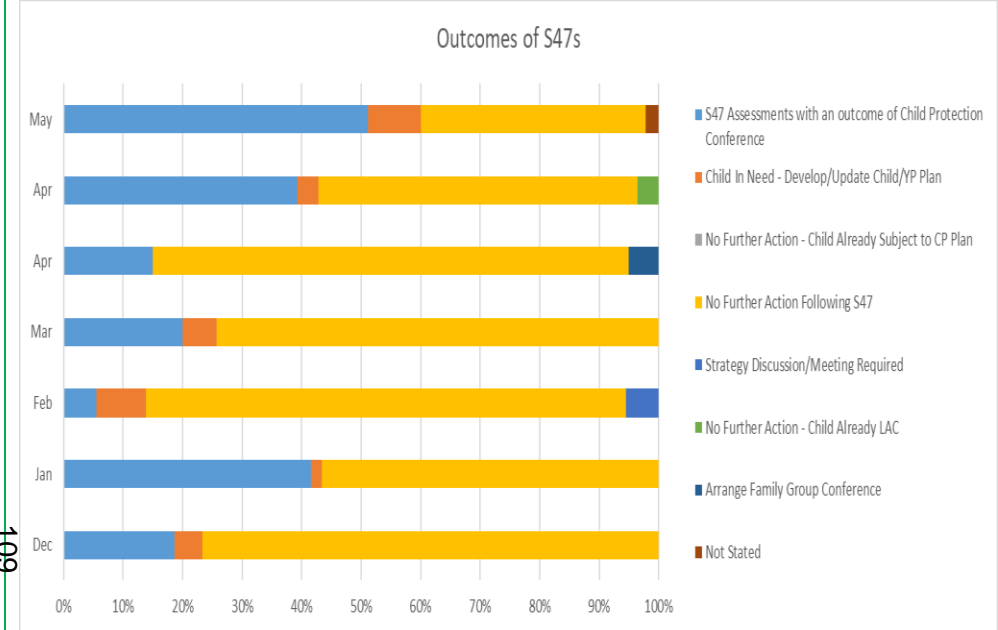
**The year to date figure is 82% ICPC in timescale.**

ICPCs in timescale % comparison							
Hfd June	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing *
74%	82%	79%	75%	83%	79%	82%	84%

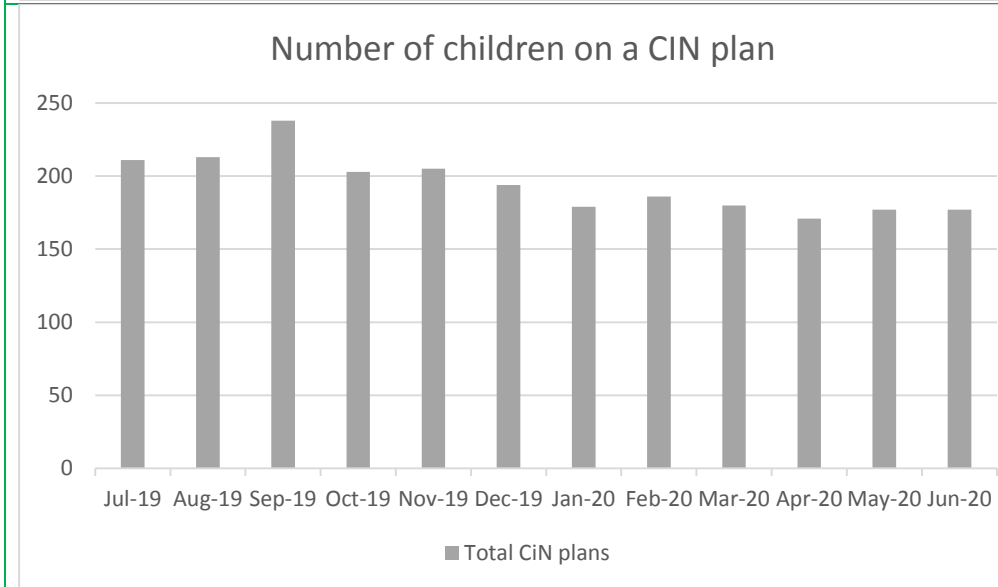
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

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

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



109



There has been a no change in the numbers of children on a CIN plan during the month. There are 177 children in a Child in Need Plan.

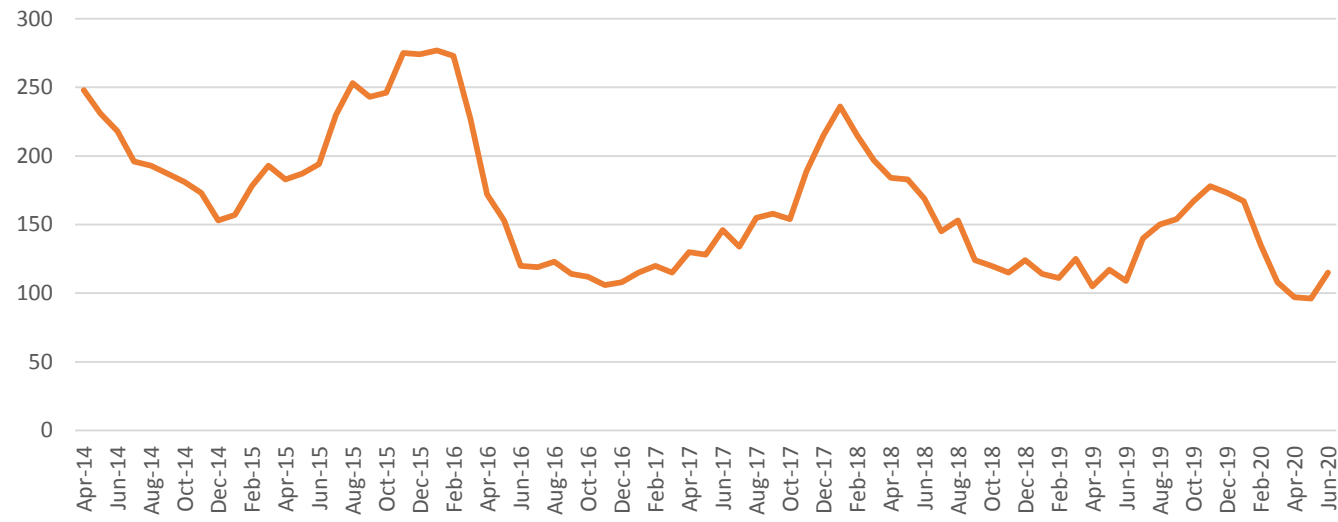
	CIN Plans		Total known CIN
	Incoming/Proposed	Started/Complete	
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>177</b>
Assessment 1	1	18	19
Assessment 2	7	2	9
Assessment 3	8	14	22
CP & Court 1	2	22	24
CP & Court 2	9	19	28
CP & Court 3	6	10	16
LAC Team 1	0	2	2
CWD	6	48	54
16+	1	1	2
Transitions	1	0	1

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.



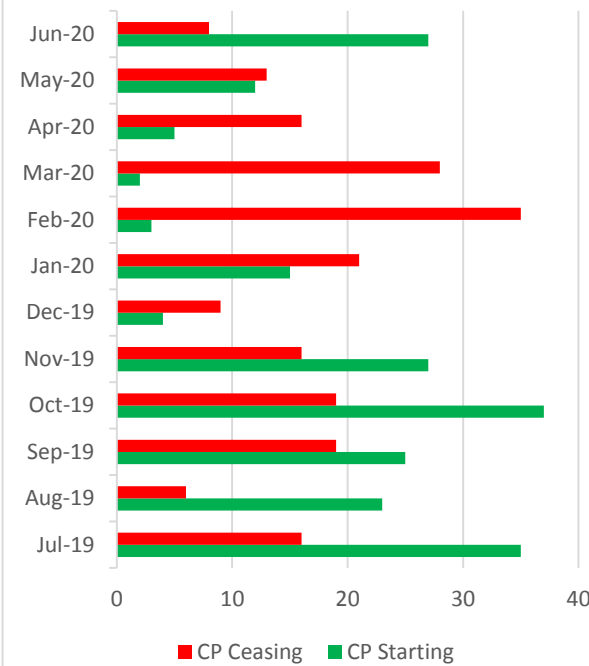
## Child Protection Plans

Number CPP at Month End



\*Note: This graph does not include retrospective action taken in Mosaic.

CP Starting & Ceasing in month



Current CP at Month End:

**115**

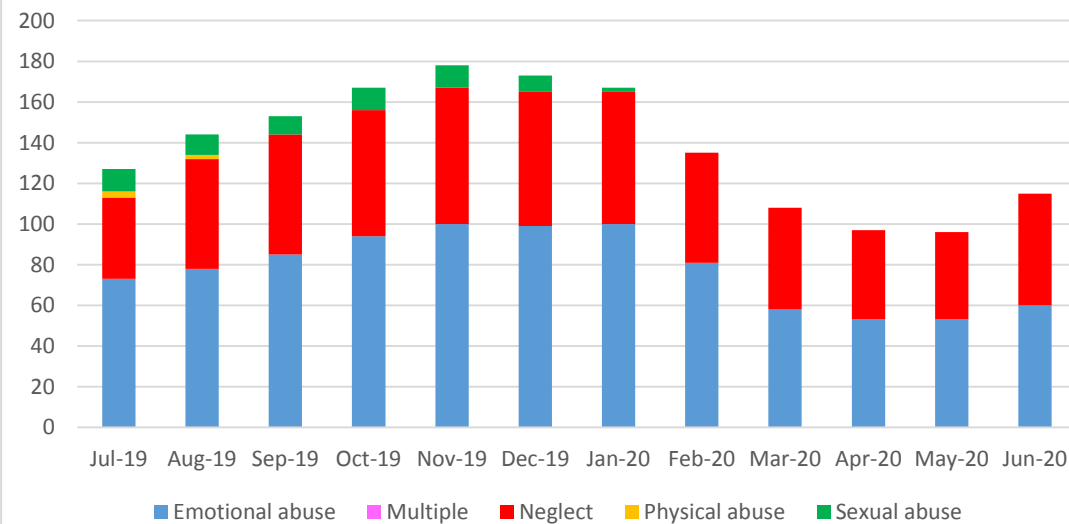
**Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans:** The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan during June has increased compared to the last month. 7 CP plans ceased in June due to no longer meeting thresholds and 1 became Looked After.

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*
32	44	43	47	45	45	29

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

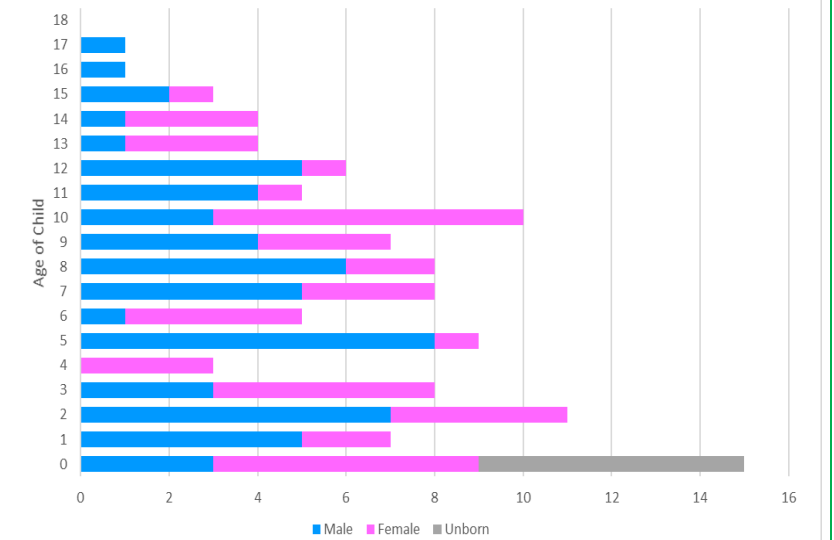
CP Plan Category



	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	June-20
<b>Emotional</b>	100 (60%)	81 (60%)	58 (54%)	53 (55%)	53 (55%)	60 (52%)
<b>Neglect</b>	65 (39%)	54 (40%)	50 (46%)	44 (45%)	43 (45%)	55 (48%)
<b>Physical</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0	0	0	0
<b>Sexual</b>	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0	0	0	0

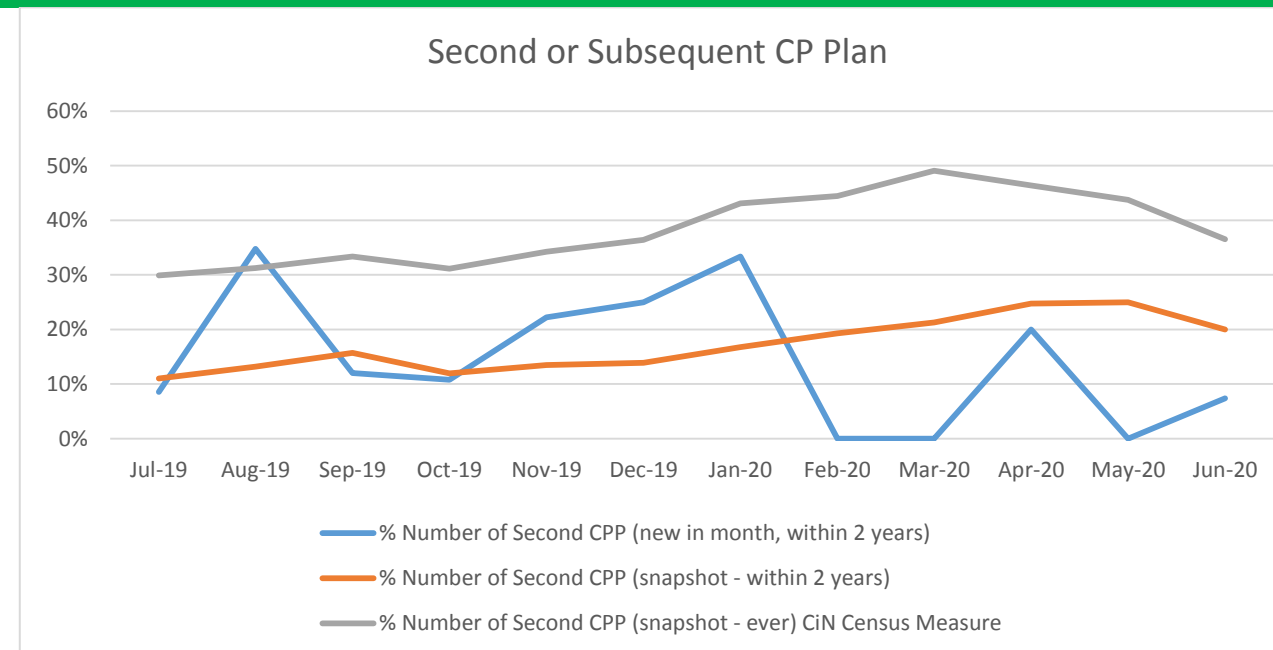
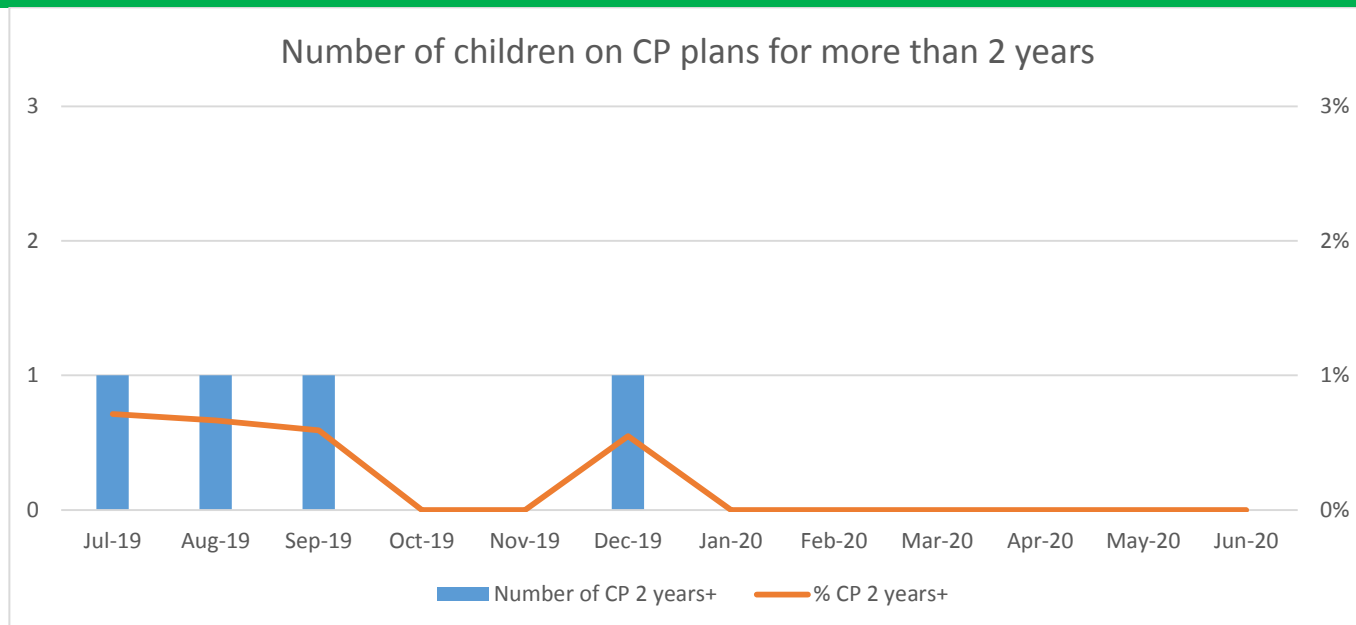
The above table gives the categories of CP plans as at the last day of the month

Age of current CP



**Reason for Child Protection Plans:** During June, 60 children were identified as having a plan in relation to emotional abuse, 55 for neglect, 0 for sexual abuse and 0 for physical abuse.

## Child Protection Plans



**Child Protection Plans open for 2 or more years:** In June, there was 0 children that had been on a plan for over 2 years.

CP 2+ years (for those currently CP)							
Hfd June	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
0	0	2	3	1			

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

**Second and Subsequent Child Protection Plan:** Of the 27 children becoming CP during June, 2 of them had been subject to a plan in the last 2 years. Of the 115 children that had a CP plan at the end of June, 23 (20%) had been subject to a plan within 2 years of the start of their current plan (37% had been on a plan at any stage prior to the current plan)

The graph above shows 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.

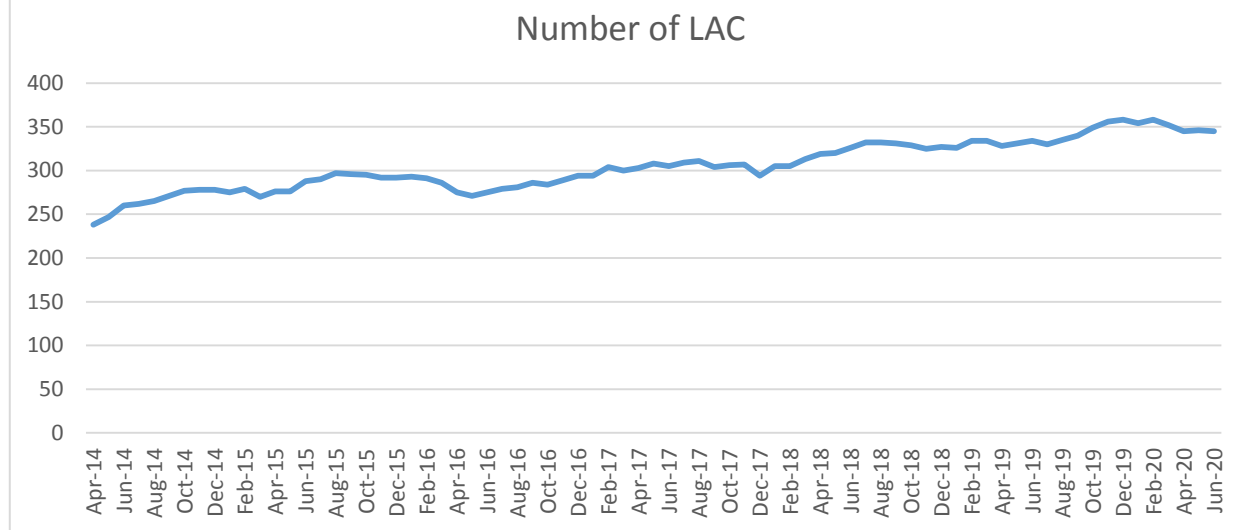
CP 2 <sup>nd</sup> and subsequent						
Hfd June	England	Stat Neigh	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
20%	-	-	11%			

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

**Female Genital Mutilation:** In June 2020 no cases of FGM have been identified.

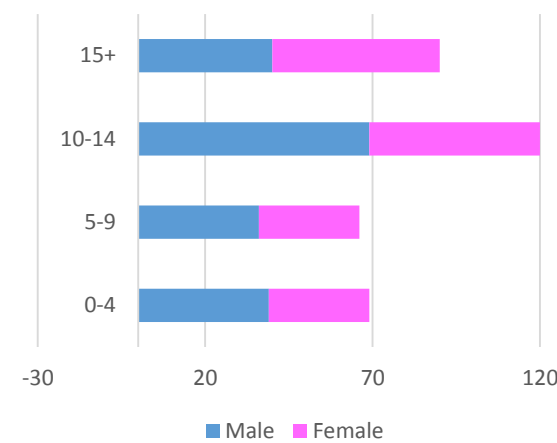


## Looked After Children



\*Note: This graph does not include retrospective action taken in Mosaic.

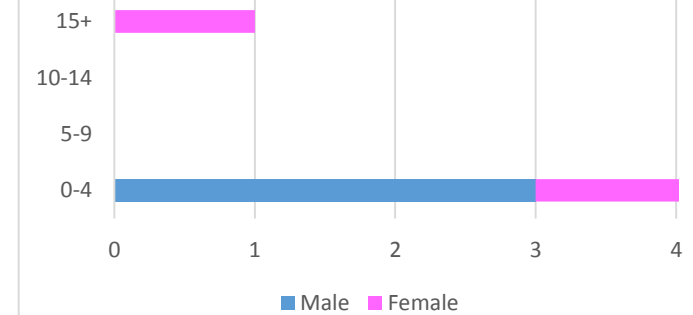
Age & Gender of LAC (at month end)



Current LAC at Month End:

**345**

New LAC Starters in period



**LAC Numbers:** As at the end of June, the number of Looked After Children was 345.

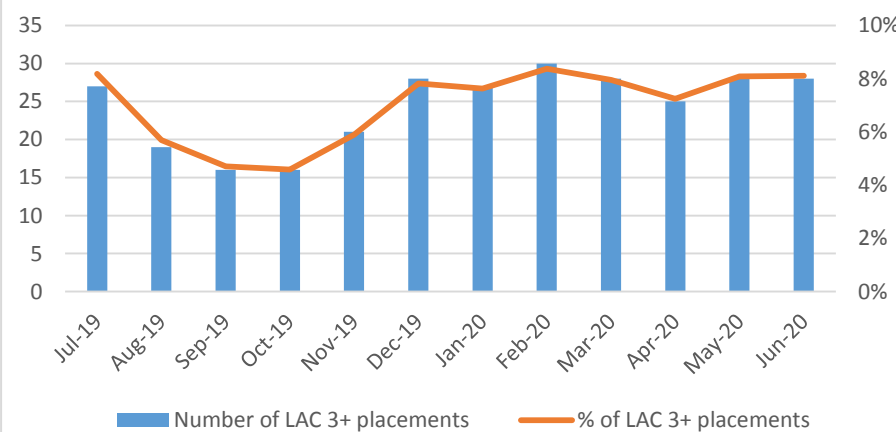
LAC Rate (per 10,000)						
Herefordshire June	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
96	65	54	82	55	66	48

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

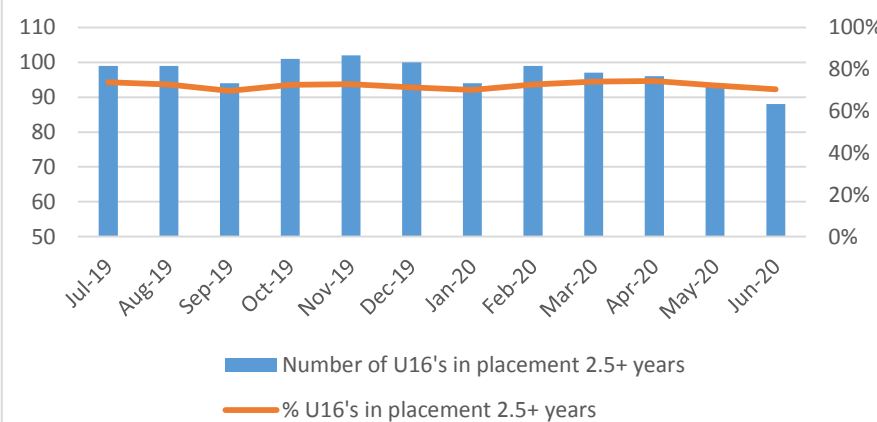
**New LAC in Period:** During June four 0-4 year olds and one 15+ year old child became LAC.

**LAC Cessations:** Six children ceased LAC in June: Two turned 18, two returned home, one had an SGO granted, and one ceased for 'any other reason'.

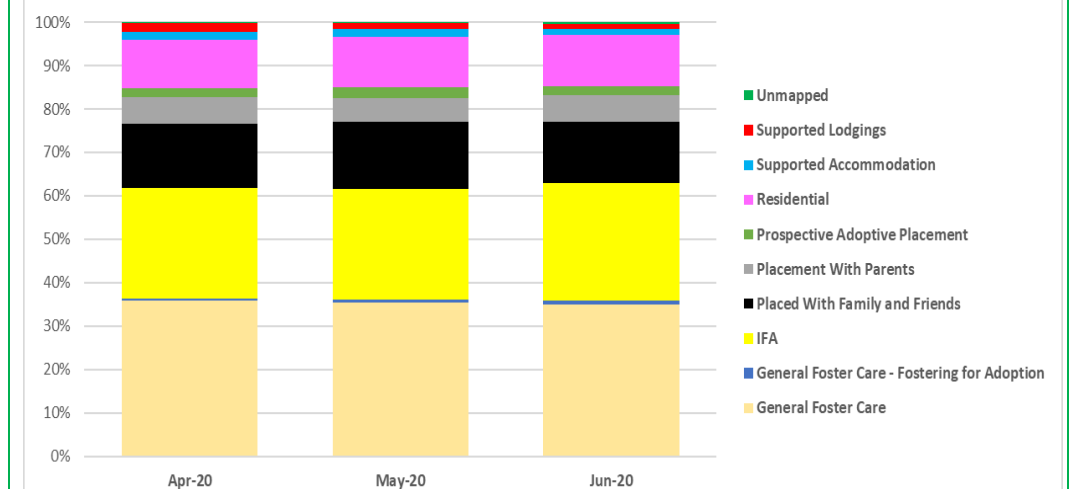
Number and percentage of LAC with 3 or more placements



Number and percentage of U16 LAC in placement for 2.5+ years



Placements Types



**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. June has seen no change from May, which was 8%.

**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. We have seen a small decrease this month to 70% from 72% in May.

**Current LAC Placements:** The above graph is new and reflects the considerable amount of work across a number of teams that has gone in to making the recording and reporting on Placement Types more accurate. The graph above shows that the largest number of placements are with General Foster Carers (35%), followed by IFAs at 27%, Placed with Family and Friends at 14% and Residential at 12%.

% 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*
8%	10%	11%	10%	10%	10%	12%

% LAC 2.5+ yrs in same placement

Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
70%	69%	67%	68%	72%	69%	68%

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

## Care Leavers

	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
<b>Cohort</b>	30	36	29	95
<b>LA in Touch</b>	28 (93%)	33 (92%)	24 (83%)	85 (89%)
<b>In Suitable Accommodation</b>	27 (90%)	30 (83%)	26 (90%)	83 (87%)
<b>In Education, Employment or Training</b>	16 (53%)	21 (58%)	16 (55%)	53 (56%)

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*
89%	89%	91%	90%	92%	89%	87%
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Suitable Accommodation						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
87%	85%	86%	85%	87%	87%	85%
% 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*
56%	52%	53%	51%	57%	55%	55%

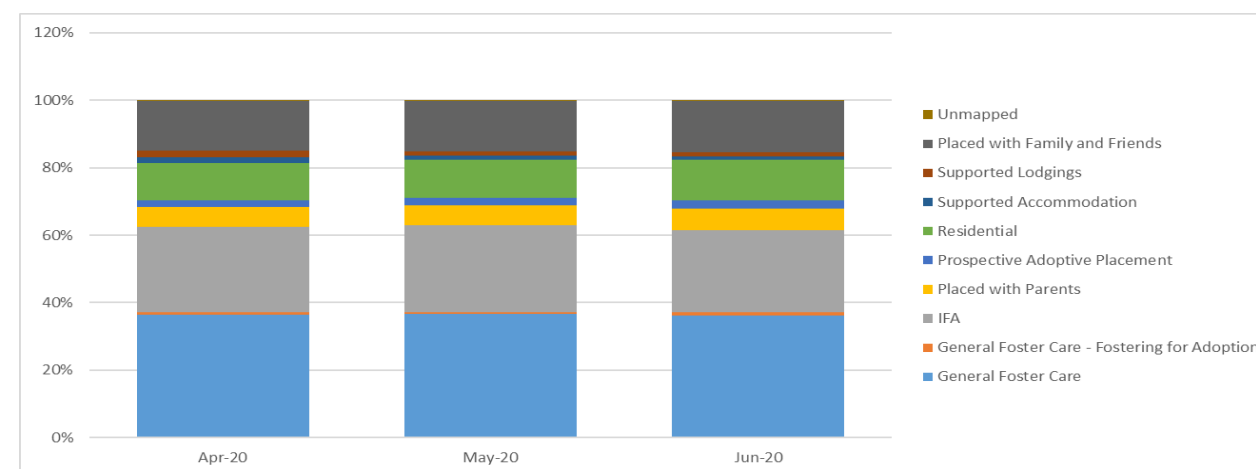
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours West Midlands & OfSted).

## Fostering & Adoption

### Fostering

	April 2020		May 2020		June 2020	
	Nights	Percentage*	Nights	Percentage*	Nights	Percentage*
General Foster Care	3828	36%	3928	37%	3747	36%
General Foster Care – Fostering for Adoption	60	1%	66	1%	90	1%
IFA	2663	25%	2757	26%	2537	25%
Placed with Family and Friends	1536	15%	1584	15%	1564	15%
Placed with Parents	614	6%	619	6%	663	6%
Prospective Adoptive Placement	224	2%	240	2%	240	2%
Residential	1155	11%	1222	11%	1240	12%
Supported Accommodation	178	2%	136	1%	121	1%
Supported Lodgings	202	2%	138	1%	120	1%
Unmapped	30	0%	31	0%	32	0%

• Due to rounding, the total of the percentages will not always equal 100%

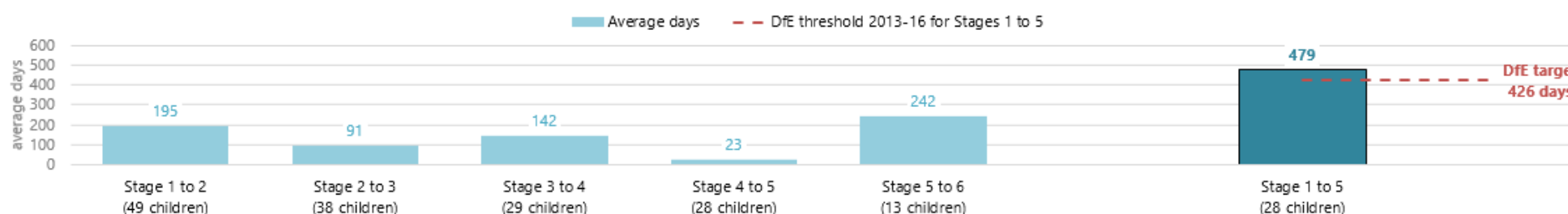


### Adoption

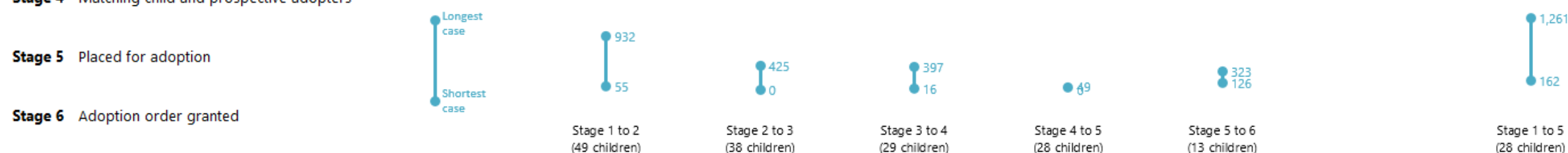
The following information is lifted from Annex A, based on children adopted, waiting to be adopted, or having an adoption decision reversed in the last 12 months.

#### Timeliness of each stage of the adoption process

Average duration of each stage (number of days)



Range in days between shortest and longest cases at each stage



### Weekly Action Plan Metrics:

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

#### Case Supervisions @ 06/07/2020

Team	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Over 3 Months to 6 Months	Over 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	No Complete Supervision Step	Grand Total	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Within 3 Months
16+ Team	16	20	17	14				67	24%	30%	25%	79%
Assessment Team 1	6	7	2	3			1	19	32%	37%	11%	79%
Assessment Team 2	12							12	100%	0%	0%	100%
Assessment Team 3	18	3	1			1		23	78%	13%	4%	96%
Child Protection & Court Team 1	4	37	20	3				64	6%	58%	31%	95%
Child Protection & Court Team 2	16	55	13	1		3		88	18%	63%	15%	95%
Child Protection & Court Team 3	41	31	12					84	49%	37%	14%	100%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	33	33	16	2				84	39%	39%	19%	98%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	36	33	29	4				102	35%	32%	28%	96%
Children with Disabilities	22	25	38	6	1			92	24%	27%	41%	92%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>94%</b>

93% of CIN cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

96% of CP cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

94% of LAC cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

94% of cases have a supervision within the last 3 months.

CIN/CP/LAC	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Over 3 Months to 6 Months	Over 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	No Complete Supervision Step	Grand Total	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Within 3 Months
CIN	72	55	39	8	1	2	1	178	40%	31%	22%	93%
CPP	23	68	16	3		2		112	21%	61%	14%	96%
CPP & LAC		1	2					3	0%	33%	67%	100%
LAC	109	120	91	22				342	32%	35%	27%	94%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>94%</b>

### Worker Supervision

Operational Teams	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)
	May	June
	End Month	End Month
LAC2	86	100
Early Help (Nicky Turvey)	100	100
HOS (MASH, Assessment Teams)	100	100
MASH	100	100
LAC Support	100	100
Assessment 1	100	100
LAC1	100	100
Head of Fieldwork	100	100
Head of LAC	100	100
Assessment Team 3	100	100
CP/Court 3	100	100
CP/Court 2	100	100
CP/Court 1	100	100
Fostering	93	94
16+	100	93
CwD	0	92
Assessment 2	100	86
FSW Assessment Teams	50	83
Principal IRD	88	13
Head of S&R	0	0
ECHO and Family Support	0	0
Head of Additional Needs	100	0
Principal Social Worker	0	0
Early Permanence	0	0
FSW CP1 (Snr Prac)	available July	available July 2020
FSW CP2 (Snr Prac)	available July	available July 2020
FSW CP3 (Snr Prac)	available July	available July 2020

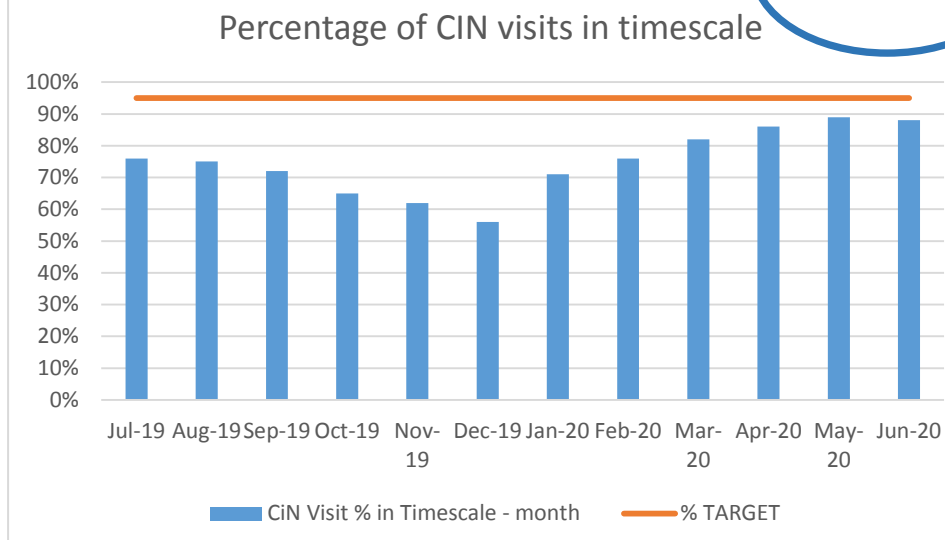
#### End of Jun 2020

Service Area	May-20	Jun-20	Trend	Monthly Total Trend
All Teams	86%	86%	→	
Operational Teams total	82%	83%	↑	
Business Support total	100%	96%	↓	

Business Support Teams	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	Hyperlink to team data
	May	Jun	
	End Month	End Month	
Head of Business Support	100	100	<a href="#">Head of Business Support</a>
Placements	100	100	<a href="#">Placements</a>
Business Support Dev Manager	100	100	<a href="#">BS Dev Manager</a>
Business Support 1	100	100	<a href="#">Business Support 1</a>
Business Support Team Leaders	100	95	<a href="#">Business Support Team Leaders</a>

**CP, LAC, and CIN Visits**

108 children out of 123 were seen on time



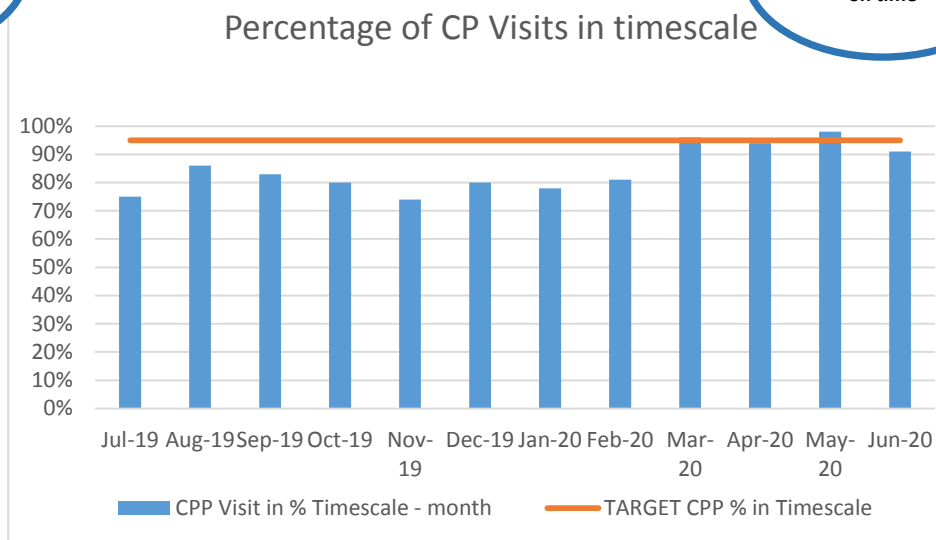
The above chart shows CIN Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of June 88% of CIN Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 88% and is below 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated CIN Cases	% in timescale
Assessment 1	10	100%
Assessment 2	4	100%
Assessment 3	12	75%
CP Court 1	20	75%
CP Court 2	17	94%
CP Court 3	6	100%
CWD	50	90%
LAC Team 1	2	100%
16 +	2	50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123*</b>	<b>88%</b>

\*This data has come from 6<sup>th</sup> July Weekly Visits Report. The number of allocated cases do not match the actual number of CiN cases due to new CiN cases not requiring a visit in the month and ceased cases that have had a visit.

79 children out of 87 were seen on time



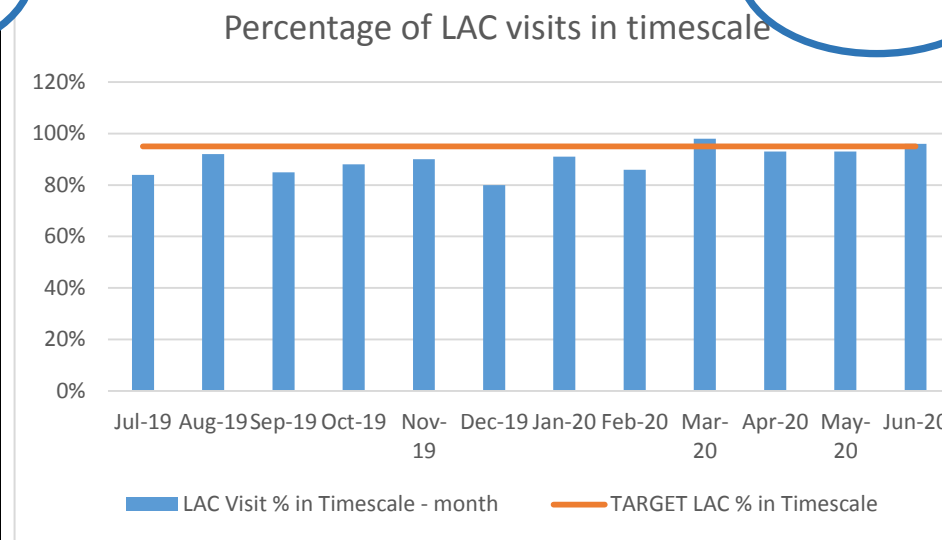
The above chart shows CP Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of June, 91% of CP Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 94% which is slightly lower than the 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated CP Cases	% in timescale
CP Court 1	23	100%
CP Court 2	31	77%
CP Court 3	32	100%
16+ Team	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87*</b>	<b>91%</b>

\*This data has come from 6<sup>th</sup> July Weekly Visits Report. The number of allocated cases do not match the actual number of CP cases due to new CP cases not requiring a visit in the month and ceased cases that have had a visit.

330 children out of 344 were seen on time



The above chart shows LAC Visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of June, 96% of LAC Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 94% and is slightly below 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated LAC Cases	% in timescale
CP Court 1	16	100%
CP Court 2	16	100%
CP Court 3	30	87%
LAC 1	82	100%
LAC 2	102	100%
16 +	64	84%
CWD	32	97%
Assessment 3	1	100%
Transitions	1	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>344*</b>	<b>96%</b>

\*This data has come from 6<sup>th</sup> July Weekly Visits Report. The number of allocated cases do not match the actual number of LAC cases due to new LAC cases not requiring a visit in the month and ceased cases that have had a visit.

### Caseload and Worker Allocations

Team (click on Team name to go to Team Page)	Number of <u>All</u> Workers <u>Holding Cases</u> in Team	Team Workers as per Establishment (FTE) (Only Case holders) (includes SP MP and Senior SW)	Number of Cases by team	Average Caseload per team based on workers holding cases	Average Caseload Per Team - based on FTE of the team Establishment	Number of <b>SW</b> <b>Worker Role</b> <u>Holding Cases in</u> Team	Number of SW Worker Role <u>holding more</u> <u>than 20 Cases</u> <u>(or pro rata part</u> <u>time workers</u>	Percentage of qualified social workers holding more than 20 cases <i>(SW on zero caseload</i> <i>not included in</i> <i>calculation)</i>	Highest Number of cases held by a qualified social worker <i>within the</i> <i>team (excluding SP</i> <i>and MP)</i>
16+ Team Allocated worker	7	7	70	10	10	7	0	0%	14
16+ Team PA	8	8	138	17	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	
16+ Virtual Worker	n/a	n/a	110	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	na	
Assessment Team 1	7	6.9	89	13	13	4	1	25%	24
Assessment Team 2	4	7	60	15	9	4	0	0%	18
Assessment Team 3	5	7	82	16	12	5	0	0%	20
Child Protection & Court Team 1	7	7	65	9	9	5	0	0%	13
Child Protection & Court Team 2	8	8	88	11	11	7	1	14%	21
Child Protection & Court Team 3	7	8	90	13	11	6	1	17%	21
Children With Disabilities (CSW only)	7	6.1	109	16	18	6	2	33%	21
Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	5	6	87	17	15	4	2	50%	18
Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	8	7	109	14	16	6	3	50%	20

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.

At the end of June:

Team	% qualified social workers holding more than 20 cases
Assessment Team 1	25%
Assessment Team 2	0%
Assessment Team 3	0%
CP Court Team 1	0%
CP Court Team 2	14%
CP Court Team 3	17%
Looked After Team 1	50%
Looked After Team 2	50%
16+	0%
Children With Disabilities	33%





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and young people scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 September</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Work programme 2020 - 2021</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Democratic Services Officer</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose and summary

To review the committee's work programme 2020/21; the updated version of the committee's work programme for the current council year, 2020/21, was agreed at the meeting of the committee on 28 July 2020. Since that meeting the changes in paragraph 3 below are proposed to the work programme which the committee is asked to agree.

## Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- (a) reviews the 2020/21 work programme at appendix a and discuss any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme;
- (b) agrees the changes to the work programme itemised in paragraph 3 below;
- (c) receives and notes the executive response (appendix b) to the recommendations arising from the child exploitation task and finish group; and
- (d) 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. The committee is asked to agree the following change to the work programme:
  - That the report concerning the impact of the pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers is deferred to the next meeting of the committee on 1 December 2020.

### 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 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 could consist of individuals with valuable skills and experience that would assist a task and finish group to undertake a review (see below).
7. The executive response to the recommendations and outcomes of the child exploitation task and finish group is attached as appendix b to this report. The committee is asked to receive and note the executive response.



## **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](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.

## **Equality duty**

14. 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.
15. 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 report concerns the administrative function of the children and young people scrutiny committee, it is not felt that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

16. 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.
17. 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**

18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. Under section 4.5.19 of the constitution task and finish groups will report their findings/outcomes/recommendations to the relevant scrutiny committee who will decide if the findings/outcomes/recommendations should be reported to the cabinet or elsewhere.

## **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.

## Consultees

24. The work programme is reviewed at every committee meeting.

## Appendices

- Appendix a – Work Programme 2020/21
- Appendix b – Executive response to the recommendations and outcomes of the child exploitation task and finish group
- Appendix c – Recommendation tracker

## Background papers

None identified.



## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

15 September 2020

### Work Programme 2020/21

Meeting date: 2 June 2020 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 22 May	
Item	Description	Report Author	Form of Scrutiny*
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan.	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.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Child Exploitation task and finish group – outcomes and recommendations	To receive the outcomes and recommendations of the child exploitation task and finish group.	Matthew Evans	Policy review and development
Meeting date: 28 July 2020 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 20 July	
Schools update	To provide an update on the reopening of schools including detail of the number of children who have returned to school and how schools will continue to support children who have not returned. The report should include detail the known situation of the mental health impact and educational deficit experienced by pupils during the lockdown.	Ceri Morgan/Alison Naylor	Performance review
Corporate Parenting Strategy – 2020-2023	To consider the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023 and the Care Leavers covenant.	Gill Cox	Pre-decision scrutiny
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 2020/21.	Gill Cox	Performance review
Meeting date: 15 September 2020 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 7 September	

Review of peer on peer abuse cases	To provide the outcome of the review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer on peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).	Ceri Morgan	Performance Review
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan	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.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Decision on accommodation and support framework for care leavers.	To conduct pre-decision scrutiny on developing proposals for a local contract framework for purchasing accommodation based services for care leavers and other vulnerable young people ahead of a key decision in 2020.	Ewen Archibald, Christa Jackson	Pre-decision call-in
Meeting date: 1 December 2020 – <b>1.00 p.m.</b> <i>Date subject to change in accordance with the budget 2021/22 timetable</i>		Despatch: 23 November	
Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the budget proposals for 2021-22 relating to Children and Families.	Andrew Lovegrove, Josie Rushgrove	Pre-decision call-in/Policy review and development
Update on reducing the number of looked after children (LAC)	Updates concerning efforts to reduce the number of looked after children (LAC). To include an update on the 49 cases presented to the meeting on 25 November 2019 that had been identified for Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) or reunification.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan	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.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Impact of pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers	To provide a report concerning how the council is intending to address the impact on school and care leavers of the potential economic downturn and reduced employment opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.	Ceri Morgan	Performance Review
Meeting date: 2 February 2021 – <b>1.00 p.m.</b> <i>Date subject to change in accordance with the budget 2021/22 timetable</i>		Despatch: 25 January	

Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the budget proposals for 2021-22 relating to Children and Families.	Andrew Lovegrove, Josie Rushgrove	Pre-decision call-in/Policy review and development
Meeting date: 23 March 2021 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 15 March	
School Examination Performance	To consider school performance of summer 2020 and make recommendations to cabinet on how the effectiveness of the school improvement framework and strategy could be enhanced.	Alison Naylor	Performance review
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan	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.	Andy Gill	Performance Review

**Business to allocate in 2020/21** – Access to Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and Speech and Language Therapy – **Briefing note to be provided and task and finish group convened as a priority**  
– Early Help Strategy – policy review and development item – scrutiny panel - **Proposed**  
– Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) – task and finish group – **Proposed**

Youth Justice Plan	To endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2020/21 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 2021/22. A representative of West Mercia police will also be invited to the meeting.	Youth Offending Team	Performance Review
Oral Health Needs Assessment	To provide a report on the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment.	Public Health	Performance Review
Childhood obesity	Update on work of the council to address childhood obesity – to be scheduled for a meeting in 2021	Public Health	Performance Review
Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation	To provide detail on the work of the prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire	Liz Elgar	Performance Review

Briefing note concerning the NEETs project			Briefing note
Outcome of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans			Briefing note
Current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire			Briefing note
Public Health England BSIL Programme			Briefing note

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



## Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Child Exploitation task and finish group]

<p>Between November 2019 and December 2019 a task and finish group concerning child exploitation was conducted.</p> <p>The following was recommended to the executive:</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation</u></b></p> <p><b>That the executive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>undertakes an exercise to highlight to the local community the work that has been undertaken over the past year to coordinate local partners addressing Child Exploitation; and</b></li> <li>• <b>undertakes publicity to raise awareness of Child Exploitation issues locally and promote the reporting of issues and concerns to assist disruption and prevention work.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Executive Response</b></p>	<p>Agreed. There is a need to raise awareness as part of a Public Health led initiative, to co-ordinate information and advice regarding the risk to young people’s health and welfare from exploitation. This key area of preventative activity is key component of the new Child Exploitation strategic plan being developed by the CE Strategic Group (will be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September). Action though on this area has already commenced with a particular focus on young people participation and best methods of promoting key messages and resources. The CE Strategic Group intend to use intelligence on high risk groups to better target public health information on contextual safeguarding and community awareness (including specific cohorts of known young people and geographical hotspots).</p> <p>Updated information on the WISH website to incorporate all forms of Exploitation not solely CSE. This also includes updated information and relevant signposting in February 2020.</p> <p>Throughout late 2019 and early 2020 children and families co-delivered with the youth justice service, monthly contextual safeguarding training to partner agencies to highlight holistic approaches to safeguarding adolescents. The aim was to promote and embed the use of the Child Exploitation risk assessment toolkit across the directorate and partner agencies. Training ceased in March 2020 but will be re-starting virtually in September 2020 All training sessions have been fully booked.</p> <p>The Child Exploitation team delivered training in November 2019 to all Designated Safeguarding Leads at annual Education Conference. The aim was to raise awareness and promote the assessment toolkit and engage partner agencies in agile responses to exploitation.</p>

CE awareness day to be incorporated into Children and Families all staff conference in collaboration with a specialist partner (NWG) - this was scheduled for March 2020 but did not happen due to COVID -19. The CE Strategic Group as part of its new delivery plan are planning a dedicated contextual safeguarding event at the end of 2020.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To establish through the CE Strategic Group a public health led publicity campaign across the county.	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2020	There is a co-ordinated public health awareness raising campaign regarding child exploitation across Herefordshire.	
To arrange and facilitate contextual safeguarding training across the partnership	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement	Start in September 2020	There is virtual training delivered across the partnership.	
The CE Strategic Group as part of its new delivery plan are planning a dedicated contextual safeguarding event at the end of 2020.	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement	December 2020	Event delivered successfully.	

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	<p><b><u>The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need</u></b></p> <p><b>That the executive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expedite the inclusion of level 3 cases in the exploitation risk assessment tool to ensure a more detailed assessment of those children and young people at risk; and</li> <li>• investigate the potential of including those children presenting at the level 2 threshold of need in the exploitation risk assessment tool.</li> </ul>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Agreed. It is good practice to ensure the exploitation tool is completed by any agency working with a child or young person at any level of need where there are emerging concerns of child exploitation.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Children and families to request all interventions with children at risk of child exploitation, regardless of the level of need, complete an exploitation risk assessment to better inform the level of risk and the intervention(s) required to meet the child/young person's need.	Ceri Morgan – Assistant Director Education Development and Skills	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	All children open to HCC Early Help/ family support service will ensure a child exploitation risk assessment is completed should there be evidence of emerging risk of Child Exploitation.	
The Early help strategic group (right help right time) to work with partner agencies, to encourage the use of the Child Exploitation tool when completing an early help assessment and there is an emerging risk of Child Exploitation.	Nicola Turvey – Early Help Manager	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Any agency working with a child at level 2 will consider if there is risk of child exploitation, and if so, complete the CE risk assessment.	

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	<b><u>Data sharing</u></b>			
	<b>That the executive works with partner agencies, in particular the Police and organisations in the CSP, to examine the impediments to the sharing of data and propose solutions where issues exist.</b>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Agreed. It is always important to ensure information and data can be shared as effectively as possible across all agencies, to enable children and young people to be appropriately safeguarded. There have been discussions with police regarding the Problem Profile that was being undertaken.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The CE Strategic Group will have blocks and impediments to information and data sharing as a standing agenda item, to ensure this receives regular attention.	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement	Ongoing	Data sharing protocols are used effectively to protect young people	Information and data sharing is a standing agenda item on each meeting agenda to ensure that the CE Strategic group share any blocks or impediments so that these can be addressed across the partner agencies

<b>Recommendation 4</b>	<b><u>Mapping of current services and organisations</u></b>			
	<b>That the executive facilitates a mapping exercise of all current Child Exploitation services provided by local organisations and agencies and publicises the finalised map to all organisations, agencies and the public.</b>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Agreed. This links to Recommendation 1 response - will include a list of local resources and organisations that is updated by the CE team that all colleagues can access.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The CE Strategic Group to lead on pulling information together as to services available to support both young people, and their parents and carers, where there is concern regarding child exploitation. There will be	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's	End December 2020	All services to young people will be mapped, and the information	

further work, as previously described, on listening and responding to the voice of young people.	Safeguarding Quality and Improvement Karen Wright		made available to parents, caterers, young people and professionals across Herefordshire.	
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<b>Recommendation 5</b>	<b><u>Promotion of training and raising awareness</u></b>			
	<p><b>That the executive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Considers the promotion of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to schools or groups of schools;</b></li> <li>• <b>Investigates the provision of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to all members of the Council; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Arranges the hosting of a parish summit on Child Exploitation to raise awareness throughout the local community and inform parish and town councils how to contribute to disruption and prevention work.</b></li> </ul>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Part agreed. Whilst it is agreed that there should be awareness raising across schools, the Child Exploitation team is a very small team, and would not have the capacity to train schools, even if clustered. A presentation to the schools Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting to fulfil this recommendation.</p> <p>Agree a presentation to council members.</p> <p>Agree hosting a parish council summit at which a presentation could be delivered by the CE team.</p>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
CE Head of Service, Barb Langstaffe, to liaise with Alison Naylor, Head of Learning and Achievement, to arrange presentation at DSL event(s) as appropriate for primary and secondary schools.	Barb Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review  Alison Naylor – Head of	September 30 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Schools will have greater awareness of the signs of exploitation, and will be able to complete the CE risk assessment tool to better	

	Learning and Achievement		inform their response and interventions.	
CE Head of Service Barb Langstaffe to liaise with Chris Jones, strategic business intelligence manager, to arrange date and time for briefing to council members on child exploitation. Briefing will be delivered before the end of November 2020	Barbara Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review  Chris Jones – Strategic Business Intelligence Manager	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Councillors will have a greater awareness of the signs of exploitation	
CE Head of Service Barb Langstaffe to liaise with Chris Jones, strategic business intelligence manager, to arrange date and time for a presentation to be delivered at a parish council summit preferably before the end of November 2020.	Barbara Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review  Chris Jones – Strategic Business Intelligence Manager	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Parish councillors will have a greater awareness of the signs of exploitation	

<b>Recommendation 6</b>	<u><b>Signposting and reporting tools</b></u>  <b>That the executive:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undertakes a review of the signposting of information concerning Child Exploitation to identify improvements that could be easily accomplished across agencies; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Works with organisations involved in the development of the new reporting Tell Someone app to expedite its introduction.</b></li> </ul>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Part agree. This will be incorporated along with Recommendation 4 mapping of current services and organisations actions, under a whole system approach captured under Recommendation 1. This will pull all information together and can then be disseminated via safeguarding partnership website for all agencies to access.</p> <p>The WISH website has been updated by the Child Exploitation team to incorporate all forms of exploitation.</p> <p>Young people have requested an online platform such as Instagram or Facebook for this information to be accessible and signpost them to the services they may require. Will also consider the potential introduction of the Tell Someone app and sharing of experience of other organisations.</p>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
See actions under Recommendation 1 and 4. The Child Exploitation Strategic Group will implement as part of its delivery plan.	Andy Gill - Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding Quality and Improvement	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Signposting is clear and accessible and if agreed, a rollout plan for the use of the above reporting app.	

<b>Recommendation 7</b>	<b><u>Annual Child Exploitation summit</u></b>				
	<b>That the children and young people scrutiny committee considers the scheduling of an annual Child Exploitation summit as part of its work programming.</b>				
<b>Response</b>	To be completed by the scrutiny committee – to be considered as part of the scrutiny committee’s work programme prioritisation session. Supported by the Child Exploitation Strategic Group.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
See above and Recommendation 1					

<b>Recommendation 8</b>	<b><u>Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people</u></b>				
	<b>That the executive develops a clear pathway for young people (not in care), vulnerable to exploitation, during transition to adulthood to ensure that services and access to support continues over the age of 18.</b>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	Agreed				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Pathway to be developed by Child Exploitation team that links into the transitions protocol. Key part of the Child Exploitation Strategic Groups delivery plan.	Barbara Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review	October 2020	A clear pathway will be in place for all young people that enables them to continue to access the services and support that they need		

<b>Recommendation 9</b>	<b><u>Licensing and safeguarding training</u></b>				
	<b>That the executive considers what other licenses granted by the council could include a requirement for mandatory safeguarding training.</b>				



<b>Executive Response</b>	Agreed Training is mandatory for Taxi Drivers and being delivered through the work of the Safeguarding Business Unit. Consideration needs to be given to the development of mandatory training for security staff in the night time economy, sports coaches, those with alcohol licences and transportation hubs.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Training packages to be developed that can be delivered to specific areas of employment that provide them with mandatory safeguarding training	CE Team	December 2020	Training Packages developed and training arranged.	

<b>Recommendation 10</b>	<p><b><u>Children not in school</u></b></p> <p><b>That the executive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>undertakes a review of the risk of exploitation to children not in school and determines whether additional resource should be dedicated to the home education team to assist in the identification of safeguarding concerns relating to children not attending school; and</b></li> <li>• <b>works with schools to ensure that a Child Exploitation risk assessment is conducted on individual pupils ahead of the application of fixed term exclusions.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Partially agreed. Determines whether additional resource should be dedicated to the home education team to assist in the identification of safeguarding concerns relating to children not attending school. This is being considered by Ben Straker.</p> <p><b>Undertakes a review of the risk of exploitation to children not in school and determines whether additional resource should be dedicated to the home education team to assist in the identification of safeguarding concerns relating to children not attending school:</b></p> <p>The current law on home education states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If your child is currently on the roll of a school you are not obliged to inform the school that he or she is being withdrawn for home education or gain consent for this. However, it is sensible to do so, in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings as to how you intend to fulfil your parental responsibility for your child's education. The school is obliged to inform the local authority of children removed from its admission register and will give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent. Parents of children withdrawn from school for home education are not legally obliged to inform the local authority themselves</i></li> <li>• <i>Your local authority has no formal powers or duty to monitor the provision of education at home</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local authorities have a general duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 175 of the Education Act 2002) in relation to their education functions as a local authority. This applies equally to children who are being educated at home, as it does to children attending school. This duty does not entitle a local authority to insist on visiting a child's home, or seeing the child, simply for the purposes of monitoring the provision of home education.</li> <li>Informal enquiries can include a request to see the child, either in the home or in another location. But the parent is under no legal obligation to agree.</li> </ul> <p>As a consequence, until the law is changed at a national level requiring that the Elective Home Education Officer must have access to an EHE child on a regular basis and be informed of all children being home educated (a national register) a review to establish if more resources were required to assist the EHE Officer in identification of exploitation/safeguarding concerns would not provide the information to allow a cost benefit analysis to be completed.</p> <p>The EHE Officer currently works effectively with the multi agencies including the MASH, schools, the CE team and others, referring in concerns if they have them and attending multi agency meetings in order to assist in the safeguarding of EHE children. Attention needs to be focussed on changing the national laws regarding EHE and then additional resource would become useful in assisting with identifying safeguarding concerns for EHE children.</p> <p><b>Works with schools to ensure that a Child Exploitation risk assessment is conducted on individual pupils ahead of the application of fixed term exclusions”</b></p> <p>The current guidance from the DFE on exclusions states that: ‘The head teacher must take into account of their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following an exclusion’</p> <p>Schools must therefore take into account the safety of the child before excluding them either for a fixed term period or for a permanent exclusion and as a result many schools already have strategies in place to deal with a child where an exclusion is not a ‘safe’ option. The use of a child exploitation risk assessment should be amongst a number of tools that schools consider before excluding a child however it would not be appropriate to complete one before every fixed term exclusion. The vast majority of fixed term exclusions are for periods of less than 5 days and there is a limit on the number of days a child can be ‘fixed term’ excluded for in any one term and year. If a child is given a fixed term exclusion of more than 5 days, the school has to ensure that they arrange alternative provision for the child. The use of the child exploitation risk assessment should therefore continue to be promoted to schools as one part of the tool kit that should be considered when excluding a child</p>			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To continue to promote the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment with schools via termly briefings to head teachers and designated safeguarding leads and through	Alison Naylor – Head of Learning and Achievement	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020	Conferences and briefings will include information/training on the Child	November 2020 education safeguarding conference – session led by the CE team on CE and using the new CE RA tool.

<p>training events e.g. the safeguarding in education conference. <i>See Actions under Recommendation 5.</i></p>	<p>and Victoria Blackmore – Education Safeguarding Office</p>		<p>Exploitation Risk assessment and schools will consider the need to complete one as part of their RA processes before excluding a child</p>	
<p>To complete a short review of the risk to exploitation of children not currently in school (EHE) children with the child exploitation team</p>	<p>Victoria Blackmore - Education Safeguarding Office and Joy Burnett – Elective Home Education Officer</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> December 2020</p>	<p>A written report is completed on the risk to exploitation of EHE children</p>	



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

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

25 November 2019	Review of budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the children and young people scrutiny committee	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the planned investments for looked after children, edge of care and improving social care services and requests further information is submitted to the committee regarding proposals for these services; and</li> <li>• Asks that a report concerning the dental health initiatives is provided to the committee setting out key performance indicators for the proposals.</li> </ul>		Completed
	Update on reducing the number of looked after children	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognises the work that has been undertaken and the progress made in implementing systems to reduce the numbers of looked after children; and</li> <li>• Asks that a report is submitted to a meeting in 12 months times which provides a breakdown of the progress made in regard of the 49 children identified for SGOs or reunification.</li> </ul>	Added to work programme for committee on 2 December 2020.	Completed
	Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan	RESOLVED: That the committee notes the report and the improvements made since the previous quarter.		Completed

	2019 / 2020			
14 January 2020	Review of budget and corporate plan proposals for 2020/21 relating to the remit of the children and young people scrutiny committee	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the additional areas of investment identified in the budget;</li> <li>• Writes to the local MPs to request details of actions to lobby central government to improve oral health in Herefordshire; and</li> <li>• Requests a report to a forthcoming meeting of the committee containing the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment.</li> </ul>	<p>Correspondence sent on 30 January 2020.</p> <p>Added to work programme for committee on 2 December 2020.</p>	Completed
	Spotlight review – outcomes and recommendations	RESOLVED: That the committee agrees the recommendations and outcomes of the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review (appendix b) for submission to the executive, subject to the amendments to recommendations outlined above and evaluation of appropriate factual corrections.	Executive response reported to the committee meeting on 2 June 2020	Completed
16 March 2020	School Examination Performance	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes the report and the good results in key</li> </ul>		Completed



	2019	<p>stage 1 and key stage 2; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request that in future the presentation of the results is set against performance in earlier years.</li> </ul>		
	Review of performance and progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requests that in future details of the changes that the directorate was trying to accomplish be presented in a one page briefing document including details of the intention of a project, who was responsible for it and how change would be measured.</li> <li>requests a briefing note on the mind of my own (MOMO) app.</li> <li>proposes that all members of the children and young people scrutiny committee be invited to the performance challenge session.</li> <li>agrees that meetings are scheduled four weeks after the release of the quarterly report concerning the safeguarding and family support improvement plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This suggestion is being looked into and future reports of progress against the improvement plan will outline how the recommendation could be taken forward.</li> <li>Circulated on 15 April 2020.</li> <li>Arrangements are being looked into.</li> <li>The scheduling of meetings is being looked into.</li> </ul>	
2 June 2020	Review of peer on peer abuse cases	<p>RESOLVED - That the committee agrees the deferral of the report to the next meeting on 28 July to allow for the inclusion of the 2017 review and risk assessment pro forma and clarification of gaps identified in the information provided.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the report is considered at the meeting of the committee on 15 September 2020.</p>	
	Review of performance and	<p>RESOLVED: The committee agrees that:</p>		

	<p>progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consideration is given to how future versions of the report could provide details of the prioritisation of actions in the improvement plan;</li> <li>• consideration is given to how third sector organisations could be resourced to support actions in the improvement plan;</li> <li>• the children and families directorate works with the adults wellbeing directorate to undertake joint work on establishing a clear transition pathway for vulnerable young people;</li> <li>• all members of the committee should be invited to attend performance challenge sessions; and</li> <li>• the outcomes of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans to be made available to the committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitations to Council members of the committee have been circulated.</li> <li>• added to the committee's work programming.</li> </ul>	
28 July 2020	Schools update	<p>RESOLVED – That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee recommends that a further survey is undertaken concerning children's mental health and schooling arrangements during the pandemic;</li> <li>• A briefing note is circulated providing details of the number of private nurseries that have opened in September 2020 and stayed open in October and November;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the national catch-up programme;</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work on children’s mental health is prioritised by the committee and includes a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children;</li> <li>• Further detailed examination of the outcomes of the survey is undertaken to determined how the provision and effectiveness of mental health services were impacted during the lockdown;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the attendance rates after the return to school in September.</li> </ul>		
	Corporate parenting strategy 2020-2023	<p>RESOLVED - That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wording of the bullet point in the care leavers covenant concerning commissioning and procurement required clarification;</li> <li>• A role for members of the council in respect of assisting looked after children could include the signposting of children in care and care leavers to local organisations offering work experience and apprenticeship opportunities; and</li> <li>• Priority 5 of the corporate parenting strategy should include mention of market towns, the involvement of local communities and the youth games.</li> </ul>		





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and young people scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 September 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Review of peer on peer abuse cases</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills</b>

## Classification

Part exempt

Appendix 2 - This Appendix is Exempt from Public and Press Disclosure ( Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972) ( As amended by Local Authorities ( Access to Information Exempt Information ( England) Order 2006 – Exempt Paragraph 2.(Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose

To consider a report which is a review (including lessons learned) into peer on peer sexual abuse cases referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The report is in draft until scrutiny have made their recommendations and observations and then considered further by the executive in arriving at a final report for determining a policy for Herefordshire Council.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The committee considers the outcomes of the review as set out in the draft report and determines any recommendations and observations it wished to make to the executive.**

## Alternative options

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Ceri Morgan,, email: [ceri.morgan@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ceri.morgan@herefordshire.gov.uk)

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; 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 its meeting on 14 January 2020 following the completion of a spotlight review into peer on peer abuse in schools and made recommendations to the executive. One of the recommendations from the spotlight review asked for the outcomes of the review into peer on peer abuse cases referred into the MASH to be presented to the committee.
3. At the meeting of the children and young people scrutiny committee on 2 June 2020 the report that was presented was deferred as the committee stated that the report would benefit from referencing wider context, lessons learned and action taken over the years, including the Spotlight Review and recognising that the council's approach could have been strengthened further by sharing a draft risk assessment tool at the same time as the council shared other tools with school representatives. Also that the approach could have been strengthened in the past by providing written guidance rather than presentations and briefings.
4. The Chairperson of the committee referred to the independent review of April 2017 into a case of peer on peer abuse at a Herefordshire school and the pro forma risk assessment arising from the review. The review had not been shared with the scrutiny committee or the spotlight review of peer on peer abuse in schools and was not referred to in the report before the scrutiny committee.
5. The report stated that 8 cases of peer on peer abuse referred to the MASH between January 2017 – October 2018 were before the introduction of national guidance. However the outcomes and recommendations of the April 2017 review, providing guidance on the handling of peer on peer abuse cases, would be of relevance to the 8 cases. The lack of a reference in the report to the review was a gap which needed addressing together with greater detail on the cases reviewed including whether they involved rape or sexual assault and how many were then the subject of legal proceedings or not. It was explained that as the report currently stood there was not sufficient information for the committee to undertake effective scrutiny. Without sight of the April 2017 review and the pro forma risk assessment the committee would not be able to make a judgement on what guidance was available at the time of cases between January 2017 – October 2018.
6. Therefore it was deferred until its next meeting to allow the areas raised to be addressed to enable the scrutiny committee to have all of the relevant information contained within the final draft report to enable them to undertake effective scrutiny. The re-submitted report attached at Appendix 1 addresses the committees concerns and provides the necessary information to enable them to undertake the scrutiny required.
7. The local authority's role is the provision of support, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding in early years settings, schools and colleges and to develop, implement and monitor quality assurance processes across schools, colleges and settings. This service is provided by the learning and achievement team who work with the organisations, not individual pupils.

8. This review looked at historic cases that were referred into the MASH of known recorded peer on peer sexual abuse where there was sexual assault/rape/or alleged cases (appendix 2 (exempt)). It covered the years Jan 2017- Oct 18 and Oct 2018 – Nov 19. The methodology involved reviewing over 300 cases reported to MASH and then identifying peer on peer sexual abuse cases from the period January 2017-November 2019 where pupils attended the same schools (appendix 3). The advice given by MASH, in those cases identified and where it was recorded, was assessed against the guidance available from the Department for Education (DFE) on peer on peer abuse at the time
9. Furthermore the review considered the April 2017 (appendix 4) report that was commissioned by a school in Herefordshire to consider the approach taken and make recommendations to the senior leadership team of the school.
10. The council has committed to keeping training and guidance to schools a priority in all such cases for the future - and has accordingly - led training for all Designated Safeguarding Leads in all schools. There is also a set of recommendations agreed to strengthen the review of any such fresh cases as they arise. This will adopt a multi-agency approach and we will apply rigorously any changes to DfE and legal advice in these cases. We will also implement any further service changes as a result of the findings of the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) audit work. The cabinet member has also agreed the response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight review into peer on peer abuse and these will be implemented.
11. The draft report and the recommendations of this committee will then be further considered by the executive in arriving at a policy decision for handling peer on peer abuse cases in Herefordshire.

## **Community impact**

12. The approach to peer on peer abuse for children and families in Herefordshire is an important and integral part in the provision of safeguarding, education, health and care services for vulnerable children and their families throughout Herefordshire. This enables the council to work with children, young people and their families where this is possible 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. This contributes to fulfilling the aims of the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2019-2024 and the councils County Plan 2020-2024.

## **Equality duty**

13. 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.

14. 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. This is a factual report highlighting the outcomes of the review into historic cases of peer on peer abuse, including areas of good practice, areas for improvement and the next steps that council will take. Peer on peer abuse is an Equality issue and the outcomes of the review demonstrate that the council has considered this and is committed to working to support those effected while exercising its Equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

15. The outcomes arising from the review largely reflect work that is already underway. There are no additional cost implications to the outcomes as actions will be met from existing budgets.

## **Legal implications**

16. There are no legal implications arising from the contents discussed in the appendices to this report which provides information regarding the review of historic cases of peer on peer sexual abuse with recommendations as to future work .. The law relating to safeguarding and peer on peer abuse is set out in the legal section of appendix 1.
17. Furthermore the legal basis for the recommendations are shown within and are commented upon with appendix 6.

## **Risk management**

18. There are no risks associated with agreeing the content of this report which provides information regarding the review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse and indicate how the work is being taken forward.

## **Consultees**

19. None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Report on peer on peer abuse review of historic cases dealt with by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Appendix 2 – Historic cases of peer on peer abuse EXEMPT

Appendix 3 – Details of cases under review period

Appendix 4 - Redacted CSO report April 2017 and Recommendations

Appendix 5 – Definitions – What is Peer on Peer Abuse

Appendix 6 – Legal basis for recommendations



**Title: Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 – 2019**

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**DRAFT REPORT 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020****1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this review is to assess Herefordshire Council's handling of peer on peer sexual abuse (as defined in the terms of reference below) allegations referred to MASH in its schools since 2017. The definition of what constitutes peer on peer sexual abuse and what MASH is are set out below. It was commissioned by the Chief Executive following agreement for the review to take place with the Leader of the Council in autumn 2019 initially and requested for review as a result of the Herefordshire Council's Children and Young Persons scrutiny committee Spotlight Review December 2019. In addition to ensuring children are safeguarded, the Review looks at:
- a) How extensive peer on peer sexual abuse is within Herefordshire schools over a defined time period.
  - b) Whether over that time there had been careful and correct application of the national guidance in place, and if that alone was enough to protect children or whether there is a need to improve monitoring and support practices.
  - c) What response Herefordshire Council took following an incident at a Herefordshire school in April 2017.
  - d) Seeks to provide an answer to the question of whether an assurance can be found that children who have experienced peer on peer sexual abuse will not end up in the same educational setting together in the future and that they are kept safe.
  - e) Provides assurance how children in Herefordshire Schools are safeguarded in this regard.
- 1.2 This review considers the number and type of cases that were referred to MASH (see below for a definition of MASH) during a specific period (between January 2017 and November 2019) to see if the advice given was robust enough, the actions taken by the schools and the council were appropriate and whether or not the council could have done anything differently. This period was then split into two periods as the national guidance and statutory provisions changed in December 2017, again in May 2018 and then again in September 2019.—The two review periods are January 2017- October 2018 and October 2018 to November 2019. It is also the case that prior to October 2018 the

council did not routinely keep a record of all the details of peer on peer referrals - hence the split time period.

The specific Terms of Reference commissioned for this review were:

- a) Identify cases that were referred to MASH that were peer on peer sexual assault/rape cases/alleged cases. Start with 2019, then work back for 2018, then 2017.
- b) Assess the advice given, taking into account the national guidance available at the time.
- c) Contact the school/college to confirm if advice was followed or what action was taken.

1.3 In addition to establishing how robust our processes have been and if guidance given was appropriate, as discussed above, the review crucially, establishes that no children were put or left at risk.

1.4 It will also summarise what are the next steps for Herefordshire Council and its other partners need to take, including questions asked nationally, in order to further strengthen the statutory and wider provisions and guidance in dealing with peer on peer abuse in schools

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 The time period used in this review was selected as it covered the period when national awareness of the issue was growing and guidance was changing nationally. In addition, Herefordshire had experienced a growing incidence of reporting of peer on peer cases during the time, although numbers remained low. The reasons behind the growing trend are not fully known but are attributed to promoting wider awareness locally and better quality recording on MOSAIC (an internal secure recording system). Also Herefordshire Council had started to implement several changes to practice involving advice and guidance.

2.2 In essence how did Herefordshire compare with wider national bench marking? Did we have a higher or comparable incidence of cases? Were we acting in line with guidance or could we have done better?

2.3 The seriousness and scope of peer on peer sexual abuse has attracted national attention in recent years. This is partly as a result of a better awareness of individual cases and also as a result of better quality reporting. However, Ofsted say (Ofsted published blog, 4 October 2019) that it is hard to say how widespread a problem it is. There is no reliable national benchmarking data available. It is therefore difficult to compare across local authority areas. As a consequence we are unable to compare the levels of incidence in Herefordshire with other areas easily. Ofsted do not hold such data either. This is a gap in the national system of recording.

- 2.4 A survey study conducted by The University of Bedfordshire in partnership with the Institute of Applied Social Research (Beyond Referrals, June 2020) provides some sense of the scale and extent of the national problem. The study looks at wider harmful sexual behaviour than this report. It shows some bleak figures. 64% of girls aged 13-21 experienced some kind of sexual harassment in school for example, and around one quarter have experienced some kind of unwanted sexual touching. It also highlights some very specific contexts (it is more likely to happen at the end of a school day and off site). Only around 49% of victims would speak to an adult about it and it is more likely to be a parent than a school teacher they speak to. The study also reports that irrespective of where sexual harm takes place, 'a focus on the individual young people is insufficient and it must be accompanied by a recognition of the broader context and culture that facilitates and can prevent, harm occurring'.
- 2.5 Ofsted report that they believe it is a growing problem. In Autumn 2018 they reported a 29% increase in children seeking help from Childline due to peer on peer sexual abuse. Ofsted do not specifically inspect this aspect during their routine inspections of schools but report if it comes up under any wider safeguarding concerns.
- 2.6 This growing trend led to specific guidance being established and published by the Department for Education. This has been updated since the early versions. In addition, the statutory guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, was updated in September 2019 and again in June 2020 with minor modifications.
- 2.7 That guidance, since September 2019 says that in the event of an alleged rape or assault by penetration, schools/colleges are expected to remove the alleged perpetrator immediately from both the classes and the transport that they may share with the alleged victim whilst an investigation into the case takes place. They are also expected to organise break times and mealtimes to avoid further contact. Separation of both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator(s) during the investigation appears to be the main national mechanism for dealing with the issue as well as writing a risk assessment/safety plan and ensuring support is offered to all children.
- 2.8 There is no national guidance on how long these arrangements should continue, especially if any police investigation proves inconclusive. Therefore any separation arrangements must be continued for 'as long as necessary'. There is a recognition that schools and colleges cannot deal with this issue alone. There is little awareness nationally that this separation could last almost indefinitely, with the subsequent impact on both alleged victim and perpetrator and their families (and indeed the schools).
- 2.9 Given this national guidance, could Herefordshire Council have implemented any better advice than was minimally required? In particular in the light of learning from one particular case during 2017.

- 2.10 This review will summarise the extent and severity of the issue locally during the period in question (see exempt appendix table 1).
- 2.11 This review does not seek to ask individuals to revisit experiences that might cause them damage or harm. Although individual schools have been contacted to discuss what actions they took, no individuals involved in any cases have been contacted.

#### **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Section 47**

- 2.12 The review involved identifying referrals, (January 2017-November 2019), into MASH following allegations of peer on peer sexual abuse cases where the *pupils were in the same educational setting*. MASH is the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub which has on it representation from all agencies involved in protecting children, including for example, social care, health, police and education. A Section 47 enquiry refers to Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 requires councils to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- 2.13 Once cases were identified, the advice on each case was reviewed in light of the national guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) in place at the time, to assess if the advice was compliant with national guidance. Following the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 it was further requested that the recommendations from a report commissioned in April 2017 into a specific incident (see above) were also taken into account when reviewing the cases, given the learning that had been identified in that local case. Each of the settings identified were contacted to confirm if the advice had been followed and what action was taken as a result of the referral. What could we, as a council, have done better?
- 2.14 The review was undertaken by reviewing officers with limited or no connection with any previous cases, heads of service, the principal social worker(s), the quality assurance manager and the case progression officer in the children and families directorate. As such it was an objective, but internal, review process.
- 2.15 Contacting the schools/colleges was led by the Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills and involved staff within that division of the directorate.
- 2.16 This review also offers some recommendations for future activity which will themselves become subject to further scrutiny and review.

### **Key Documentation and Guidance**

2.17 There are key documents which are mentioned in this review and which cover the period in question - some are national guidance and others are 'best practice' toolkits:

- a) Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019
- b) Brook Traffic Light Tool
- c) Herefordshire school and college safeguarding policies
- d) Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges (December 2017 and May 2018)
- e) West Midlands Policy: Children who abuse others
- f) Contextual safeguarding Network: Beyond Referrals
- g) NSPCC Let's Talk Pants campaign and tools
- h) Link to most recent update of KCSIE 2020 :  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/892394/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892394/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020.pdf)

2.18 This review looked at all cases of peer on peer sexual abuse reported to MASH within the time frame. Whilst all such cases are serious events there are varying levels of severity and different contexts surrounding the events. They are all not the same. Of those reviewed here, some took place out of school, some involved very young children and some involved multiple agencies. Similarly, some were disclosed long after the alleged events. Trying to respond in a proportionate and equitable way is not straightforward. However this review has looked at every case that fits the definition of peer on peer abuse (in the terms of reference above) that took place within the timeframe and where the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) attended the same educational establishment. The definitions used in this review for sexual violence and harassment are taken from the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and explained further in an appendix to this report.

### **Peer on Peer abuse incident – Herefordshire School 2017**

2.19 In 2017 a significant report was commissioned by the school, but funded by the Local Authority (who were provided with a copy), following an incident at a Herefordshire school. The report produced some recommendations for changes. A key part of this review is to see if those recommendations were implemented widely, or could we have, as council, have done more.

### **Summary of Peer on Peer Cases referred to MASH**

2.20 The total number and nature of events are collated in a table attached to this review. It is anonymised however due to the fact that some of the detail may still identify individuals. This Appendix is exempt from publication for the public and press for that reason.

- 2.21 Although below there is a detailed analysis of the two periods under review, there is a tabular appendix which summarises the totals provided (appendix attached).
- 2.22 Taken together over the 33 months, there were 28 cases of differing severity and complexity. Of these 28 cases there are 7 where the records were not completed adequately or did not show if the advice was followed. This does not mean no advice was given or followed. The review shows that in only 1 case was advice not followed and although the appropriate actions had been taken they had not been recorded in a written format.
- 2.23 The detail of the numbers and nature of the incidents in the review are contained in an appendix published with this report. In summary however, there were 10 cases logged for the period January 2017 to October 2018 and a further 18 cases for the period November 2018 to November 2019. Of the 28 cases in total 18 took place outside of school. 14 were logged as no further action needed by social care as other agencies had provided support. Police investigations were held for 10 of the cases and in 9 no prosecution was brought with one case still under review.
- 2.24 In no case are the alleged victims and perpetrators now integrated in the same institution.
- 2.25 **Analysis of the outcomes of the referrals found that:**
- a) 14 cases are recorded as 'NFA' (no further action for social care). In these cases records indicate that support was put in place from other agencies which included support from the schools, the NSPCC, WMRSASC, Early Help assessments, keep safe work by social workers, family support workers or schools.
  - b) A section 47 single agency investigation was conducted in one case resulting in a CIN Plan (child in need plan) being implemented.
  - c) Section 47 joint enquiries (multi-agency) were conducted in one case resulting in a child and family assessment being completed. The case was closed 3 months after the initial referral.
  - d) Strategy meetings were held for 3 further cases at which the presenting issues were deemed not to be high enough for a section 47 enquiry. Child and family assessments were subsequently completed and the cases closed to social care.
  - e) Police investigations were completed for 10 of the cases. In 3 of these cases the alleged victims did not want to pursue the investigations any further. In 9 of these cases it is recorded that, following police investigations, no charges were brought. 1 case is listed as still open to investigation whilst we await a decision on prosecution.

**2.26 Was the advice given at the time accurate and in line with National guidance? Could we have done more?**

- a) The DFE guidance on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in schools and colleges that applied during this period was the December 2017 version (updated in May 2018). It essentially centres on the need for completing risk assessments or a safety plan in cases of sexual violence (based on separation) and schools being advised to refer to another service, which may include the police or children and young people’s sexual advisors (ChISVAs)
- b) In 12 of the 18 cases the advice given by MASH complied with the guidance and was recorded fully.
- c) In 2 of the 18 incidents, however there were no recorded actions on the internal system (MOSAIC) for a school to take regarding putting in place a risk assessment or safety plan (this is only compulsory if the incident is sexual violence) or advice to refer on another agency. **This does not mean that appropriate advice was not given, it was however not recorded adequately and in enough detail.**
- d) In one instance, the school had already put in place the safety plan before being advised to do so.
- e) In the other of these incidents, this was because the disclosure involved an historic incident that had occurred two or more years before the actual disclosure was made.
- f) In 4 incidents the advice given was correct: Appropriate advice was given regarding referrals or support for the children involved, but it is not recorded whether a safety plan was advised or not.
- g) In one of these 4 incidents where the victim and alleged perpetrator were no longer at the same school, a safety separation plan was not deemed appropriate.
- h) In another one of these 4 incidents (a disclosure about an alleged historic event), the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim did remain in the same school for a month after the disclosure was made and the review found that safety planning and the need for risk assessments was not recorded as being discussed by the MASH. In this case, separation was put in place however and advice given and followed but not fully recorded. One of the individuals then moved schools. However no written risk assessment was completed. The school now knows what requirements are required and are diligent in applying them. It is recommended that this school be visited again to check the current status of the case. No prosecution took place.

- i) This review then contacted the schools/colleges to confirm if advice was followed and what action was taken. These conversations were with the most appropriate staff member (usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead). This was partly to see if the advice was issued and also to check what subsequent actions were taken. No families were contacted.
- j) The advice given in the 16 cases where the MASH recorded the advice given was followed by 15 of the schools.
- k) In the remaining case, advice was to complete a written risk assessment/safety plan. The school did ensure that the two pupils were in separate classes and safe areas for break and lunch times were made available. However, the written risk assessment was not completed.
- l) This failure by the school to write a risk assessment had been discovered due to multi agency working. It resulted in a safeguarding visit from Herefordshire Council education team on 13 December 2019. Consequently the school has been advised in writing about the requirements to undertake written risk assessments/safety plans in cases of sexual violence.
- m) To avoid this happening again in another setting, we are asking schools to send their risk assessments to the Education MASH team.
- n) Overall for the review there is clear evidence of the schools involved in these 18 incidents working with multi agencies e.g. the police, West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) and the Early Help Team and ensuring support is offered to the victim and/or the perpetrator.

## 2.27 **What should we have done differently?**

- a) The quality of recording of referrals and subsequent activity was not consistently good enough in the period covered by this review. This includes the record of actions taken on MOSAIC, the internal recording system. As a consequence a historic review such as this is of less value - with the passage of time details have been missed.
- b) Herefordshire could have insisted on safety plans/risk assessments being completed by schools and colleges for incidents of alleged sexual violence from May 2017 and those risk assessments/safety plans being submitted to the MASH for recording and quality assurance checks. Given that the 2017 review recommendations were available, these recommendations were not more widely shared. Even allowing for the context that schools are self-governing and autonomous institutions, sharing of good practice would, in general, help.
- c) The dependency on implementing the national guidance - but crucially, not looking to go beyond this in a systematic and published fashion - was a potential



weakness. For example, there was no full consideration or advice given at that time about additional human rights or equalities legislation. This is however also the case nationally and not just locally and national guidance was not clear about separation at that time. This is complex as balancing the rights of both alleged victim and alleged perpetrator can be a difficult judgement. There was an opportunity for a greater consideration of what more could be done to support the families of victims which takes into account the rights of both and in the light of equalities legislation.

- d) Although much has been done - it is now timely to refresh the risk assessment proforma policy for schools again - not least because the national guidance has been updated in July 2020 - but also because this provides an explicit opportunity to include wider legislation, especially equalities and human rights considerations as outlined above. It is also timely to create and issue a model policy and risk assessment process. Although any local authority cannot impose any policy on all schools it can - and we should - seek to reassure ourselves that if a school actively decides not to adopt it they are required to explain their reasoning. In the summer of 2020 Herefordshire appointed a new safeguarding officer, the national guidance has been updated and in September 2020 the new national Sex and Relationships Education programme is being implemented. Taken together this is the opportunity to integrate better practice into a broader picture of better contextual safeguarding for Herefordshire.
- e) In 2017 there was an independent review commissioned into one case - this was carried out by an organisation outside of the council. As part of that review, a helpful risk assessment process was shared with the school. It was not however shared more widely across the council. It should have been, although that moment has now passed. It was not shared as a view was taken that it belonged to the school and that there were other tools that schools could use. This risk assessment is not now fit for purpose in view of up to date guidance and legislation. It was also the case that the risk assessment was itself deemed not as robust as it could have been. However, the delay in passing on the advice was unhelpful. Peer on peer awareness training was provided to schools in the Autumn of 2017 but this didn't go as far as the content of the report.
- f) The way in which Herefordshire Council (and partner agencies) engages with families affected by peer on peer sexual abuse was inconsistent and potentially lacking in structure. This is not to say that support was not offered - indeed it is now given via MASH and other partner agencies. Officers have met with some families but there is no deep awareness of the structured response plan now in place to engage with and support families or schools facing an event such as this. Schools do engage with Herefordshire Council and yet a case by case basis can lead to inconsistency. Whilst recognising that this would require

specialist support skills it is not clear what would be the response in the event of a future case. This is not to say that this is not better now - it is - and there is a system in place which rests on good guidance and advice. However it remains the case that it is potentially variable. A flowchart is attached to show the expected process now which has been widely shared during 2020. This has helped improve consistency.

- g) Schools and settings do receive good quality and accurate advice now but they themselves do not have easy access to a support network - particularly where long term segregation needs to be in place. Support (including financial support to help with separation and the provision of on line learning) to schools facing a long term or contentious case could be strengthened.
- h) The lack of national comparative data is a concern. At present we have no robust way of comparing levels of abuse in Herefordshire to other areas. This is a national and remaining weakness. Whilst we have no reason to assume that levels are higher or lower locally, we cannot be sure.
- i) The measures above are aimed at providing advice and assessing risk - but more could be done to identify any preventative work that agencies could do. This is evident in schools where training in early preventative work is provided but less so in the sharing of information and support across agencies. More could be done to broker support for schools who experience this for the first time by being more systematic in the sharing - confidentially - of experience.
- j) When new members of staff join the Children and Families Directorate they are given a helpful induction period. This does not always include an emphasis on safeguarding risks and prevention, including an awareness of peer or peer sexual abuse. This could be included as a greater priority.
- k) Finally, the issue of prompt and rigorous responses to any disclosure should be improved. We could have listened more and acted more quickly in ensuring guidance was being followed and the recommendations from the 2017 report implemented. The timeliness of any action is crucial and a reliance on broad national guidance brought delay into some of the proceedings.

## 2.28 What have we done since?

### **What steps has the council already taken to improve how incidents of peer on peer abuse are dealt with?**

- a) In 2019 we introduced an annual school safeguarding conference for designated safeguarding leads and safeguarding governors in schools. A key focus of this conference in 2019 was peer on peer abuse. This was led by

national experts in the field. Attendance was high with almost all schools represented by school leaders, governors and safeguarding leads attending.

- b) All briefings to Chairs of Governors, Head Teachers and Designated Leads for Safeguarding include updates and guidance on best practice for dealing with peer on peer abuse. Briefings are often termly. They have taken place over a number of years now and are more usually provided by staff within the Children and Families Directorate but on occasions have national expertise also.
- c) Learning opportunities for designated safeguarding leads have been created using case studies of previous incidents of peer on peer abuse in order to highlight good practice and what lessons can be learned.
- d) A peer on peer abuse risk assessment pro forma has been issued for schools to use (autumn 2019). However a pro forma is only that - the process of risk assessment is more profound than the paperwork and council officers now support schools in this area more than previously. The newly appointed Education Safeguarding Officer will be expected to take a lead in this work. This is a significant move forward.
- e) The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee has undertaken a spotlight review into peer on peer abuse and Herefordshire Council has begun to implement the recommendations from this review.
- f) Participated in an audit into harmful sexual behaviour organised by the Safeguarding Children and Young People in Herefordshire Partnership using the NSPCC.
- g) There is greater support (via clearer guidance and associated toolkits) on offer now to schools and teachers than was the case previously. An exemplar policy has been produced by other Local Authorities (for example, Suffolk and Nottinghamshire). Herefordshire has included much of this in advice to schools but, given the significance of this issue, it should produce a similar local model.
- h) Multi-agency MASH thematic audits of peer on peer abuse referrals into the MASH take place. The most recent audit of a sample of cases has found improvements since the previous audit in both the approach and response to peer on peer abuse cases. Clear actions are in place for any highlighted areas for development.
- i) The council has reviewed the section 175/157 audit to ensure it includes a question on peer on peer abuse (the 2019 audit results show that all schools have policies and procedures in place to minimise the risks of peer on peer abuse). A number of quality assurance visits take place annually to ensure schools are robustly self-assessing their practice.
- j) The restructuring of the Learning and Achievement Team has created a new post: Education Safeguarding Officer. This post has now been recruited to and

we are awaiting for the successful candidate to take up their post in August 2020. This is a significant development.

- k) We have also undertaken a 'lessons learned' exercise through discussions with Designated Safeguarding Leads at the most recent education safeguarding meeting to establish current challenges schools face when dealing with peer on peer abuse.
- l) Safeguarding visits to schools and desk top reviews of policies are undertaken.
- m) The Learning and Achievement Team's school visit form has been reviewed and whilst they have always included a section on safeguarding, they now ensure an additional focus on peer on peer abuse as well.
- n) Herefordshire Council has worked more closely with wider partner agencies and experts since 2017. For example, this includes WMRASASC (West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre) - these agencies are now working in schools and supporting them in their work. This work could be extended and developed, particularly in the area of policy renewal and post incident support.
- o) There is a clear referral pathway process in the MASH for dealing with peer on peer abuse.
- p) We have recommended and supported the use of the Brook traffic light tool (a tool to aid prevention and early identification of cases that meet the threshold of concern based on age appropriate sexualised behaviour).
- q) So - having done all this - can we give an assurance that children who have experienced peer on peer sexual abuse will not end up in the same educational setting together again?
- r) It remains the case that if no one knows about an incident (for example it has not been disclosed) it cannot be guaranteed the children will not be in the same setting. However once disclosure has been made, the evidence now supports the view that children are separated. This is not easy in some smaller settings, but schools have gone to great lengths recently to maintain the separation and now know this is required as a minimum. The issue emerges when children then move between settings, for example when transitioning between primary and secondary school or from secondary to tertiary colleges.
- s) The process of sharing of information between settings to prevent children meeting their alleged perpetrator is not straightforward. It is especially complex if no conviction has been made or with the passage of time. The process by which this could happen, confidentially and sensitively, exists but could be improved.

## 2.29 **The review has provided the following assurance-**

- a) Given the efforts that have been made in recent months, including the conferences and guidance, I believe that children are more safe now in Herefordshire schools than may have been the case previously. This can now be built on to become a best practice authority in this regard. To do this Herefordshire must involve the expertise and awareness of those who have lived through this experience.
- b) Where advice was given and recorded, it was found to be the correct advice, based on the national guidance from the DfE at the time with one exception (for which Herefordshire Council has issued an apology). Although the recommendations and risk assessment form issued in the report commissioned by Herefordshire Council in 2017 was discussed in Chair of Governor Briefings, the specific circumstances or documentation were not shared. The Brooks Traffic Light Tool that supports professionals to assess and work with preventing sexual behaviours of children and the NSPCC “Let’s Talk Pants” campaign were highlighted as useful tools as part of briefings on peer on peer abuse. Herefordshire Council subsequently shared a peer on peer risk assessment template with schools in the autumn of 2019. Other recommendations such as raising staff awareness through training have been now been completed and can be evidenced in the section 175/157 annual audit.
- c) With the exception of one school, all other settings have followed the advice given by the MASH. In the one example, the school was advised to separate and indeed pupils were separated, but this was not recorded fully.
- d) Record keeping is improving but MASH must ensure that all advice given to schools relating to peer on peer abuse is recorded in MOSAIC.
- e) There are now regular audits co-ordinated by the Safeguarding Children and Young People in Herefordshire Partnership Quality and Effectiveness group - the latest is called a MASH thematic audit specifically on peer on peer sexual abuse (dated March 2020) which showed improvements in the quality of recording continue.
- f) Ofsted conducted a focussed inspection visit in December 2019 - as part of that visit they looked at the issue of peer on peer abuse. The report is now published on the Ofsted website - but the relevant paragraph is reproduced below. It is complimentary about the recent work in this area.
- g) There has been a significant strategic focus by the local authority since the last inspection on contextual safeguarding, and, in particular, peer-on-peer abuse and ensuring that there are appropriate responses to risk in this area. The local authority has worked closely with schools to ensure that that all have policies and procedures that both help to identify peer-on-peer abuse concerns and help to limit risks. The local authority has ensured that these issues have been the subject of practice reviews, including through a recent multi-agency spotlight

review on peer-on-peer abuse. The local authority has also undertaken audit activity in relation to service responses, including looking at school safety planning. The responses of children's services indicate that thresholds for services are appropriate and that schools are using the multi-agency hub to appropriately refer concerns. They are also using both social care staff and education officers to discuss issues and plan further work with children and families.

### 2.30 **Next steps**

- a) The council has committed to keeping training and guidance to schools and officers and council members as a priority in all such cases for the future - and has accordingly led training for all Designated Safeguarding Leads in all schools and colleges and is planning for the next education safeguarding conference. This could be tailored for individual need.
- b) We will also implement any further service changes required as part of the multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership approach as a result of the findings of the NSPCC audit work when they are received.
- c) The cabinet member has also agreed the response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight review into peer on peer abuse and these will be implemented as appropriate. There will be several dates as the actions differ.
- d) To-review what additional information needs to be recorded in MOSAIC for peer on peer abuse cases. This will include continued quality monitoring.
- e) To ensure cases of peer on peer abuse are regularly audited to enable us to continually improve and ensure best practice and advice is used by all agencies.
- f) Herefordshire will continue to engage with specialist outside-of-council agencies to support this work and further utilise their expertise.
- g) Now that an embedded process is in place by which risk assessments/safety plans are shared by schools with the MASH, the next planned step is to quality assure these documents with education and social care colleagues. Detailed feedback will then be provided to the individual school as well as sharing the generic findings from this quality assurance process with all Herefordshire DSLs (designated safeguarding leads).

## 3 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The 'what could we have done differently?' section above, alongside the recommendations agreed during the spotlight review, leads to the following recommendations:

Attached to each recommendation is a suggested timeline - these are subject to comment by scrutiny committee.

- a) Continue to improve the quality of recording on MOSAIC for any cases, including peer on peer cases. This has improved significantly since 2017 but this review found that it could be improved yet further by maintaining the quarterly audit (already in place) on all cases and adding occasional sampling exercises to identify if recording is not adequate. In particular, record keeping should indicate what advice was given and what actions were taken and there is evidence that this is now taking place.

(Monthly audits starting September 2020 and to be conducted by education safeguarding officer)

- b) Issue wider guidance than the national expectations - by looking at all legislation that may impact on such cases. There is a timely opportunity to do this now. The national guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, has been updated again in July 2020 and a key appointment to support this work has recently been made in Herefordshire. Whereas schools, in general, have a right to implement their own policies (partly because the process by which any policy is agreed is a key component of any policy), a model exemplar should now be issued given the importance of this issue. Herefordshire Council cannot enforce schools to adopt it however. The context around this issue has moved on considerably since 2017 and what was deemed appropriate then is no longer adequate if we are to learn from our experiences. There is an opportunity now to set an exemplar policy which can be leading edge practice.

(Policy to be re-issued by Children's and Families Directorate by the end of January 2021 to allow for external consultation)

- c) A risk assessment has been shared with all schools (Autumn 2019). This is not the exact one produced in 2017 and things have progressed since then. Schools are ultimately responsible for their own risk assessment processes and multiple forms and guidance are now available. More importantly, we can provide guidance in completion of the process of risk assessments. There is a danger that multiple proformas may confuse, but training in the process of risk assessment and prevention would outweigh this danger. The newly appointed safeguarding officer will lead on this aspect.

(To be a regular process but to be established by December 2020)

- d) Continually review and check that information is passed between educational settings where individuals known to have been either alleged victim or alleged perpetrator and who are moving between settings is shared. To protect confidentiality and sensitivity this process should be supported by the Local

Authority and not left to individual settings to complete. Although there is an existing protocol, the newly appointed safeguarding officer should hold this responsibility as part of the role. For example, an alert system should be established in MOSAIC to identify when individuals are likely to be moving settings.

(To be established by the education safeguarding team by the end of December 2020)

- e) Look to establish a planned approach to engaging with families (and children) impacted by peer on peer abuse. This is to include the seeking of their views and from a starting point of belief and with the consent of the families. This would include the schools involved. The level of engagement needs to also take account of equalities legislation and allow for appropriate extra counselling to be offered.

(To be established by December 2020 to allow for consultation)

- f) Establish a school support network (using existing groups) to provide help and advice in the event of any cases, but particularly long standing cases. For example, this could include a network of expert Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to advise and new DSLs, support schools and families.

(To be established virtually by December 2020, by the assistant director, education, development and skills))

- g) Propose, via a development with DfE (and Ofsted), a methodology of capturing high quality data to allow authority areas to benchmark the incidence and severity of peer on peer sexual abuse cases. The national system is not transparent enough as yet and Herefordshire, given recent efforts and advice, is well placed to contribute to improving the quality and clarity of data on peer on peer sexual abuse.

(Initial proposal to be shared with DFE and Ofsted by end of October 2020 by the assistant director, education, development and skills)

- h) Ensure that all new members of staff appointed to the Directorate are given a wider safeguarding strand in their induction, which should include peer on peer sexual abuse. This should be aimed at prevention and risk assessment rather than historic analysis. It would help make Herefordshire a benchmark for good practice in this regard.

(Initial induction activity to be in place by end of September 2020)

- i) That the council consider funding additional resources to support further peer on peer abuse training, in particular to support the educational specialist safeguarding post covering peer on peer abuse work (this post now exists - but



additional resources available for peer on peer abuse training should be considered).

(Resources to be in place as soon as council agree)

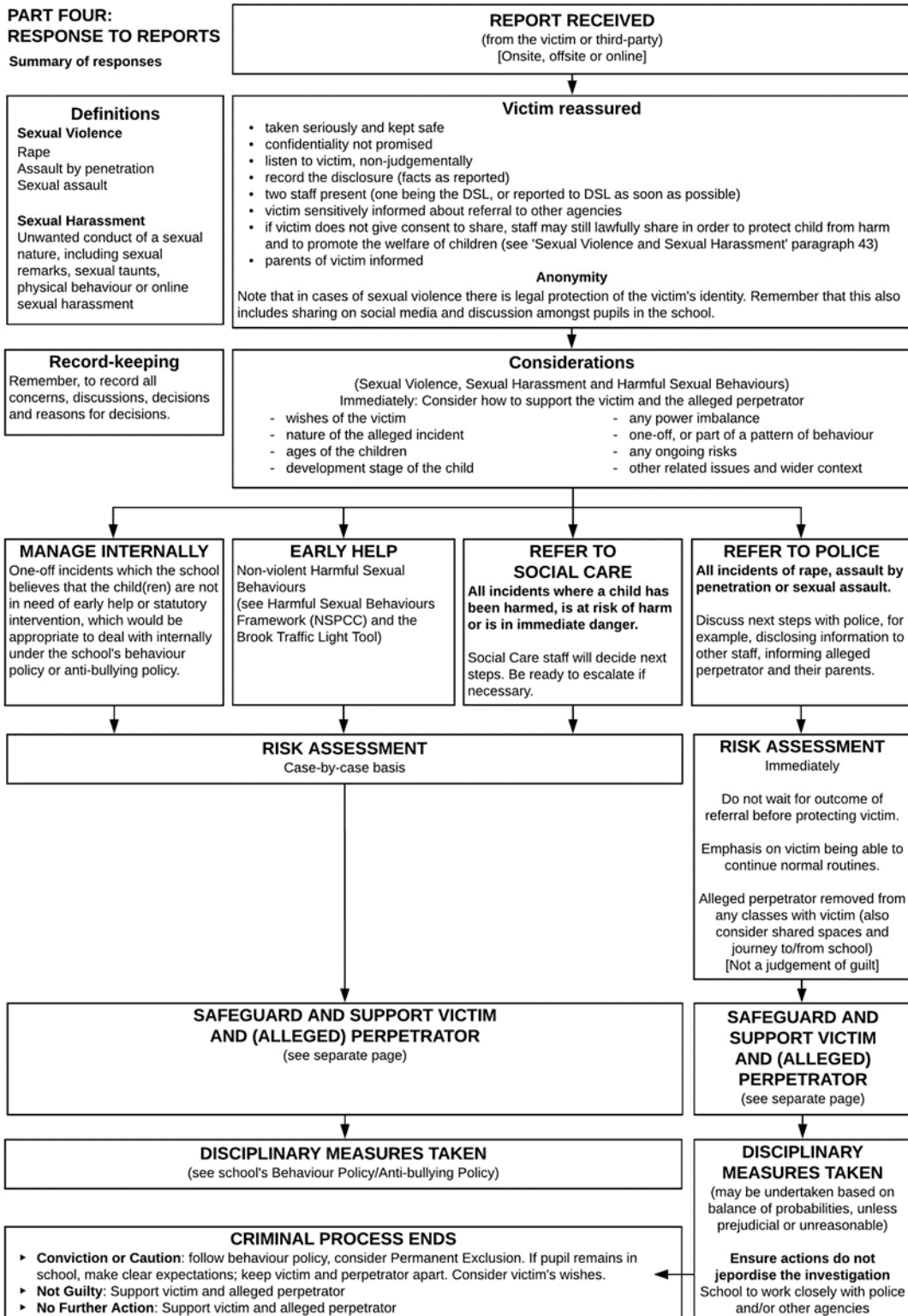
- j) That Herefordshire produces an exemplar peer on peer safeguarding guidance and model policy which is issued to all settings. It is acknowledged that whilst all schools deal with Peer on Peer abuse in their safeguarding policy as well as in other policies (such as a school behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy and the online safety policy - cyberbullying and sexting) schools now need to be more clear and specific about their strategies around wider behaviours relating to sexist and sexual bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence. In all cases adoption of such a policy is inevitably voluntary (schools will have much in place already) but an exemplar will help with review work. There is the opportunity that given the experiences thus far, Herefordshire can become a centre for excellent practice in this area, in particular by adopting the good work done in this issue, such as by Suffolk and Nottinghamshire Local Authorities. This cannot be easily achieved without the following recommendation however.

(This is in train already - to be issued as soon as wider consultation allows)

- k) Finally - Herefordshire Council needs to further acknowledge that the impact of such cases on the families and the children involved (irrespective of any findings) is likely to be profound. An apology has already been given for some of the early work - but we could do more. The council should strongly consider issuing a **process of reconciliation**; offering any family who wishes to use it an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe space with independent and expert support. Although we recognise there is as yet no formal process for such a statement (and as such the reconciliation process would need to be established), the opportunity it would present is the key. If anything positive can come from such experiences then giving a voice to those who have experienced it can be something. It is also a better way of harnessing the experiences within the county to develop more leading edge practice. This cannot be achieved unless the voices of those affected are heard.

For reasons of confidentiality we have sought not to include details that may lead to identification of any individual cases. This is crucial for many reasons. However, we are aware that on reading this, families that have experienced peer on peer abuse may wish to engage with the process of reconciliation. This includes families which we may not have had any disclosure from as yet. We would like to invite all families who may recognise their case – and those who do not, that if they wish to take up the invitation to do so. The process may differ from family to family according to wishes but the invitation is open to all.

(Timeline for consulting, engaging and establishing this process will start following comments from scrutiny)





## **4 Legal Comments**

- 4.1 The council, working with partner organisations and agencies, has specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the council to provide services to children in need in their area. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 requires councils to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Director of Children and Families and Lead Member for Children and Families in the council are the key points of professional and political accountability, with responsibility for the effective delivery of these functions.
- 4.2 These duties placed on the council can only be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Under section 10 of the same Act, the council is under a duty to make arrangements to promote co-operation between itself and organisations and agencies to improve the wellbeing of local children. This co-operation should exist and be effective at all levels of an organisation, from strategic level through to operational delivery.
- 4.3 With regard to Peer on Peer abuse, Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated in September 2019 and again in September 2020) provides statutory guidance for schools and colleges who must have regard to the guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children.
- 4.4 In relation to the recommendations Appendix 6 provides a table as to specific statutory duties relevant to each recommendation.
- 4.5 By implementing recommendations and next steps in the report Legal Services will work with the service to ensure that statutory duties as identified are complied with.

## **5 Appendices**

Appendix 2 - Historic Data Peer on Peer Cases – Exempt Appendix

Appendix 3 - Details of the cases under the review period

Appendix 4 - Create Safer Organisations Report 2017 – Redacted version

Appendix 5 - What is Peer on Peer Abuse - definitions?

Appendix 6 - Legal Basis for Recommendations

## **APPENDIX 3 - Details of the cases under the review period**

### **January 2017 – October 2018**

- 10 cases were identified between January 2017 and October 2018 that involved a form of sexualised peer on peer abuse where an alleged perpetrator(s) attended the same school as the alleged victim(s). Five of these identified cases were primary age pupils and five were secondary age pupils.
- 6 of the alleged recorded incidents took place outside of school with 4 of the alleged incidents taking place at school.
- All 10 cases have been recorded as alleged sexual violence. Of the cases recorded as sexual violence:
  - 1 is recorded as alleged rape
  - 1 is recorded as alleged assault by penetration and
  - 8 are recorded as alleged sexual assault including inappropriate touching.
- Analysis of the outcomes of the referrals found that:
  - 6 are recorded as 'NFA (no further action for social care)
  - In 2 cases that were referred in, the threshold for a section 47 enquiry (this is where a child is at risk of significant harm) was not met. In one of these cases a child and family assessment was completed. All 10 cases are now recorded as 'closed to social care'.
- A strategy meeting was held for one case that resulted in it being progressed to child protection level for one of the children involved.
- A section 47 enquiry (a child is at risk of significant harm) was held for 1 case and a child and family assessment was completed. This case was subsequently closed to social care.
- There were police investigations in 4 cases, of which 3 indicate that there were no prosecutions. 1 case we are unable to report on due to the confidential nature of the case and restrictions placed on access to the information.

### **Assess the advice given, taking into account the national guidance available at the time**

- For the first 12 months of this period the guidance available to schools nationally was general safeguarding guidance e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, which did not include specific sections or guidance on peer on peer abuse.
- The DFE central government guidance on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in schools and colleges was implemented in December 2017. This

sets out the requirements for the completion of a safety plan and advises to consider referral to another service.

- In April 2017 Herefordshire Council funded a report into a historical case of sexualised peer on peer abuse in one school; that delivered several recommendations. These recommendations (see appendix) included: a consideration of future risks posed to individual pupils and a template for a safety plan/risk assessment that was included in the report. It further recommended that Herefordshire Council would have its own policy.
- No advice was recorded as given by the MASH in 4 of the 10 recorded cases.
- Advice such as a safety plan was not given in one other case (a historical case): the victim and perpetrator no longer attended the same school.
- In the 5 remaining cases, advice is being recorded as given but safety plans were not included in this recorded advice for 4 of the cases. In the remaining case, the school had already put into place a written safety plan.
- There is evidence of schools completing 'keep safe work' such as the NSPCC PANTS programme, making referrals e.g. to the Police, social workers visiting schools and involvement of WMRSASC in order to keep young people safe and apart where recommended. There is evidence of multi-agency working.

Contact a school/college to confirm if advice was followed or what action was taken

In all cases where advice was given, the schools had followed the advice to refer to other services such as the police, WMRSASC and a health visitor. Support was also put in place by one school which is ongoing and includes the NSPCC PANTS programme and the New Start Network from Shropshire.

#### **November 2018- November 2019**

- Total cases during the period: 18 cases were identified that involved a form of sexualised peer on peer abuse where an alleged perpetrator(s) attended the same educational setting as the victim(s). However further analysis of the data in June 2020 found that 1 case has been incorrectly identified for this investigation: The alleged perpetrator did not attend the same school as the victim.
- Age Range : 4 of the cases occurred with primary age pupils, one involved pupils 16-18 years attending a college and the remainder of the cases (13) involved secondary school age pupils.
- Location: 12 of the alleged incidents occurred outside of school and 6 of the incidents occurred in school.
- Type of abuse - The types of sexual peer on peer abuse included in the 18 cases identified were: 1 case was of alleged sexual abuse, 1 was alleged consensual sexual touching, 2 were alleged sexual harassment and 14 were alleged sexual violence.

- For the 14 cases listed as alleged sexual violence: 2 involved alleged rape, 12 alleged sexual assault. 6 of the cases of alleged sexual assault related to inappropriate touching and one of these incidents is recorded as persistent inappropriate touching.





[redacted]

APPENDIX 4

The Report is a review of the process undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team when assessing risk as a result of an incident that took place between two [redacted] pupils.

Commissioned by [redacted] Head Teacher  
[redacted] school, [redacted]

[redacted]

Date: April 2017.

CSO



[redacted]

## **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1. This report has been commissioned to review the process the senior leadership team undertook to 'assess risk' and the subsequent actions taken after a serious allegation had been made which involved two pupils [redacted]
- 1.2. The circumstances of that event are not in dispute and will not to be reviewed in this report
- 1.3. [redacted]

## **2. Background / Chronology.**

- 2.1. [redacted].
- 2.2. [redacted].

## **3. Chronology of significant events: [redacted]**

## **3. Review Process. Guidance.**

[redacted]

- 3.1. The first area I considered when asked to conduct this review is what external guidance would be in place for the SLT in school to manage a situation of this nature.
- 3.2. Having spoken to (a Herefordshire council employee) who sits within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub I have established that there is no formal guidance in place in Herefordshire. I believe that there is an agenda for the Local authority to produce recommendations in the near future.
- 3.3. Therefore, at the present there is not anything in place for the SLT to be guided by locally and an absence of supporting services in the county. This is not an incident as regards notifying Ofsted.
- 3.4. The [redacted] local authority was made aware of these circumstances, (a Herefordshire council employee) informed the school that he would be taking no further action and could not see a reason for the pupil's separation.

#### **4. Positive School Actions.**

- 5.1. [redacted].
- 5.2. [redacted].
- 5.3. [redacted].

#### **5. Conclusions.**

- 6.1. [redacted] there should have been minutes of the decisions recorded. The action plan should then have been discussed with both sets of parents.
- 6.2. [redacted] there should not have been any contact at all between and a plan put in place to ensure that this was rigidly adhered to.
- 6.3. [redacted] there should have also been a supporting network in place for as well

[redacted]

- 6.4. [redacted] the pupils should have been given the option of whether they could attend lessons together. This should not have been their decision and arrangements put in place so that there was strictly no contact,
- 6.5. Arrangements should have been in place to prevent contact at breaks, lunchtime and any sporting event.
- 6.6. Also arrival and departure at school should have been supervised so that any contact would have been avoided.
- 6.7. The arrangements that were put in place were not detailed enough to ensure contact was not made and the supervision of these restrictions could have been improved.
- 6.8. [redacted].

## **7. Recommendations.**

- 7.1. Paragraph 42 of Keeping Children Safe in Education states:

*All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexing. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.*

- 7.2. [redacted] I suggest that the school introduces a system of risk assessments should a similar incident occur in the future. This assessment should be robustly recorded. How the assessment is conducted and how the SLT has decided on what action to take.
- 7.3. In these situations consideration should be given to what risks are posed to individual pupils involved, what is the likelihood of this event reoccurring and a pupil being put at further risk. Should a pupil be excluded and evidence provided if this decision is made.
- 7.4. What are the needs of the pupils involved, what supporting factors can be put in place together with details of the actions decided on. This should all be recorded formally and discussed with all parties involved. The records then stored on the pupil's confidential file.

[redacted]

7.5. I have attached some forms that the school may wish to use. The local authority should be introducing a specific policy in the near future that should be included in the school safeguarding policy.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.



## **APPENDIX 5 - What is Peer on Peer Abuse?**

All children are capable of abusing their peers. This can manifest itself in a whole spectrum of behaviours including -

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Physical abuse
- Sexting
- Up skirting (now a criminal offence and has reporting requirements)
- Initiation /hazing type violence and rituals

### **Some useful definitions:**

#### **Sexual Harassment**

This can be defined as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. In the context of this guidance this means in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

It can include

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting;

#### **Sexting**

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, and laptops - any device that allows you to share media and messages. This is also known as youth produced sexual imagery

#### **Up skirting**

This typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment. Cases of ‘up skirting’ have a mandatory requirement for being reported.

## Sexual Violence

In this guidance this refers to sexual violence in the context of child on child sexual violence. Children can and do abuse other children. Sexual violence covers a spectrum of behaviour. It can refer to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2013. This includes: -

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

## Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

It is important to know that: -

- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- The age of consent is 16;

Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.



## Appendix 6 – Legal Basis for Recommendations

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Relevant legislation/guidance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
a)	Continue to improve the quality of recording on MOSAIC for any cases, including peer on peer cases. This has improved significantly since 2017 but this review found that it could be improved yet further by maintaining the quarterly audit (already in place) on all cases and adding occasional sampling exercises to identify if recording is not adequate. In particular, record keeping should indicate what advice was given and what actions were taken and there is evidence that this is now taking place.	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004  Section 11 (Arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare) Children Act 2004	Monthly audits starting September 2020 and to be conducted by education safeguarding officer
b)	Issue wider guidance than the national expectations - by looking at all legislation that may impact on such cases. There is a timely opportunity to do this now. The national guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', has been updated again in July 2020 and a key appointment to support this work has recently been made in Herefordshire. Whereas schools, in general, have a right to implement their own policies (partly because the process by which any policy is agreed is a key component of any policy), a model exemplar should now be issued given the importance of this issue. Herefordshire Council cannot enforce schools to adopt it however. The context around this issue has moved on considerably	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004  Section 17 Children Act 1989 (places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area)  Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)  Statutory guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)	Policy to be re-issued by Children's and Families Directorate by the end of January 2021 to allow for external consultation

	since 2017 and what was deemed appropriate then is no longer adequate if we are to learn from our experiences. There is an opportunity now to set an exemplar policy which can be leading edge practice.		
c)	A risk assessment has been shared with all schools (Autumn 2019). This is not the exact one produced in 2017 and things have progressed since then. Schools are ultimately responsible for their own risk assessment processes and multiple forms and guidance are now available. More importantly, we can provide guidance in completion of the process of risk assessments. There is a danger that multiple pro formas may confuse, but training in the process of risk assessment and prevention would outweigh this danger. The newly appointed safeguarding officer will lead on this aspect.	<p>Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004</p> <p>DfE ADVICE Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges May 2018</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)</p>	To be a regular process but to be established by December 2020
d)	Continually review and check that information is passed between educational settings where individuals known to have been either alleged victim or alleged perpetrator and who are moving between settings is shared. To protect confidentiality and sensitivity this process should be supported by the Local Authority and not left to individual settings to complete. Although there is an existing protocol, the newly appointed safeguarding officer should hold this responsibility as part of the role. For example, an alert system should be established	<p>Data Protection Act 2018</p> <p>GDPR</p> <p>Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)</p> <p>Non- statutory guidance - Information sharing (Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers) July 2018</p> <p>Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004</p>	To be established by the education safeguarding team by the end of December 2020

	in MOSAIC to identify when individuals are likely to be moving settings.		
e)	Look to establish a planned approach to engaging with families (and children) impacted by peer on peer abuse. This is to include the seeking of their views and from a starting point of belief and with the consent of the families. This would include the schools involved. The level of engagement needs to also take account of equalities legislation and allow for appropriate extra counselling to be offered.	<p>Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004</p> <p>Section 17 Children Act 1989 (places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area)</p> <p>Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)</p>	To be established by December 2020 to allow for consultation
f)	Establish a school support network (using existing groups) to provide help and advice in the event of any cases, but particularly long standing cases. For example, this could include a network of expert Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to advise and new DSLs, support schools and families.	<p>Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004</p> <p>Section 11 Children Act 2004</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)</p>	to be established virtually by December 2020
g)	Propose, via a development with DfE (and Ofsted), a methodology of capturing high quality data to allow authority areas to	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004	initial proposal to be shared with DFE and

	benchmark the incidence and severity of peer on peer sexual abuse cases. The national system is not transparent enough as yet and Herefordshire, given recent efforts and advice, is well placed to contribute to improving the quality and clarity of data on peer on peer sexual abuse.	Section 11 (Arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare) Children Act 2004	Ofsted by end of October 2020
h)	Ensure that all new members of staff appointed to the Directorate are given a wider safeguarding strand in their induction, which should include peer on peer sexual abuse. This should be aimed at prevention and risk assessment rather than historic analysis. It would help make Herefordshire a benchmark for good practice in this regard.	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004  Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)  Statutory guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)	Initial induction activity to be in place by end of September 2020
i)	That the council consider funding additional resources to support further peer on peer abuse training, in particular to support the educational specialist safeguarding post covering peer on peer abuse work (this post now exists - but additional resources available for peer on peer abuse training should be considered).	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004  Section 16I Children Act 2004	Resources to be in place as soon as council agree
j)	That Herefordshire produces an exemplar peer on peer safeguarding guidance and model policy which is issued to all settings. It is acknowledged that whilst all schools deal with Peer on Peer abuse in their safeguarding policy as well as in other policies (such as a school behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy and the online safety policy	Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004  Section 17 Children Act 1989 (places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area)	This is in train already - to be issued as soon as wider consultation allows

	<p>- cyberbullying and sexting) schools now need to be more clear and specific about their strategies around wider behaviours relating to sexist and sexual bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence. In all cases adoption of such a policy is inevitably voluntary (schools will have much in place already) but an exemplar will help with review work. There is the opportunity that given the experiences thus far, Herefordshire can become a centre for excellent practice in this area, in particular by adopting the good work done in this issue, such as by Suffolk and Nottinghamshire Local Authorities. This cannot be easily achieved without the following recommendation however.</p>	<p>Statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)</p> <p>Statutory guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)</p>	
k)	<p>Finally - Herefordshire Council needs to further acknowledge that the impact of such cases on the families and the children involved (irrespective of any findings) is likely to be profound. An apology has already been given for some of the early work - but we could do more. The council should strongly consider issuing a process of reconciliation; offering any family who wishes to use it an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe space with independent and expert support. Although we recognise there is as yet no formal process for such a statement (and as such the reconciliation process would need to be established), the opportunity</p>	<p>Section 10 (Co-operation to improve well-being) Children Act 2004</p> <p>Section 11 (Arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare) Children Act 2004</p> <p>Section 17 Children Act 1989 (places a duty on local authorities to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need in their area)</p>	<p>timeline for consulting, engaging and establishing this process needs to start as soon as scrutiny / council agree</p>

	<p>it would present is the key. If anything positive can come from such experiences then giving a voice to those who have experienced it can be something. It is also a better way of harnessing the experiences within the county to develop more leading edge practice. This cannot be achieved unless the voices of those affected are heard.</p>		
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