

## Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Court Judgements]

<p>In February 2019 a task and finish group concerning an examination of the court judgements relating to children and families was conducted.</p> <p>The following was recommended to the executive:</p>					
<b>Recommendation No. 1</b>	<p><b>The T+F group welcomes the practice measures being considered by the Doncaster Children's Trust in connection to Herefordshire's IRO services. The T+F group recommends that when the Doncaster report is complete a mandatory member briefing session is provided to explain the reports finding and actions.</b></p>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Accepted – however advised that a briefing cannot be made mandatory</p>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Children and Families Directorate will cover the findings of the work with Doncaster and the action taken in a briefing session for all councillors and also in the performance challenge session that is open to all group leaders	Assistant director safeguarding and family support	End of November 2019	Councillors are informed of the findings of the Doncaster review, how these have been addressed	This briefing will be arranged by the end of November 2019, and all councillors will be encouraged to attend	

  

<b>Recommendation No. 2</b>	<p><b>The T+F group wish to ensure that all councillors understand their responsibilities toward ensuring that all children in our care are given the best possible outcomes. The T+F group recommends that the induction and mandatory training for new and returning councillors places strong emphasis on children's safeguarding and their roles as corporate parents.</b></p>				
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Accepted</p>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	

Mandatory training regarding corporate parenting and safeguarding be provided to all councillors in order that all members understand and are aware of their responsibilities	Director of children and families	June 2019	Training put on at different time to ensure all councillors have every opportunity to take up the training to ensure that all members feel confident and understand their responsibilities	Organised as part of new councillor induction programme May/June 2019 and all councillors have undertaken the training following the elections in May 2019 and the outcome of the effectiveness of the training has been surveyed by democratic services and we await the outcome of this survey
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<b>Recommendation No. 3</b>	<b>The T+F group recommends that more case progression officers are recruited to children's services to ensure that case- loads are dealt with in a systematic way.</b>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accepted			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The appointment of a case progression officer has benefitted planning for children, concentrating on early planning to avoid drift and delay, and consider permanence plans at the earliest opportunity. Another case progression officer would enable further embedding of this approach; however, it is dependent on additional funding.	Director of children and families	Decision as to whether additional funding is available	All children have clear plans of intervention. Court proceedings timescales are met. Drift and delay in planning for children is avoided.	Business case put forward for consideration as part of the budget setting process in the Autumn 2019

## Summary of recommendations to the Head of Paid Service and responses [Court Judgements]

<p>In February 2019 a task and finish group concerning an examination of the court judgements relating to children and families was conducted.</p> <p>The following was recommended to the Head of Paid Service (HoPS):</p>				
<b>Recommendation A</b>	<p><b>The T+F group supports and welcomes the efforts to foster closer working relationships between social workers and legal services in preparing social workers for court procedures. It is recommended that the head of paid services sets out expectations for this closer working to be set out clearly in officers work plans (PPdPs) and is proactively encouraged by both the children's and legal heads of service.</b></p>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	Agreed			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The closer working between social workers and legal services has been further enhanced by both being present at alternatives to care panel (established September 2018) and initial permanency planning meeting and review permanency planning meeting (established May 2019). There are no plans to end this method of working.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support (and subsequently below)	In place.	Children's plans are progressed and children do not experience drift and delay. Court directed care plans are adhered to. Court timescales are met.	In place

<b>Recommendation B</b>	<p><b>The T+F group welcomes the practice insight that has emerged as a result of the round table sessions noted in the Judgement Improvement Plan. It is recommended that the head of paid services ensures that evidence provided by prospective adopters and cared for children is properly accounted for in child permanence reports.</b></p>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	Agreed			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>

<p>Learning from round table discussions have been cascaded to social workers and team manager who have responsibility for completion of Child Permanence Reports. (CPRs)</p> <p>CPRs are quality assured before they are submitted for adoption decision making to ensure they are of the quality required.</p> <p>Adoption decision maker (ADM) provides an additional level of scrutiny to content and accuracy of CPR.</p>	<p>Assistant Director safeguarding and family support</p>	<p>In place</p>	<p>Prospective adopters are given an accurate account of children's behaviour and development. Matching of adopters and carers will be enhanced.</p>	<p>In place</p>
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<b>Recommendation C</b>	<b>It is recommended that the head of paid services ensures that there are routine reviews of the MOSAIC system in light of officer needs and technological advancements in software, with clear process and operator guidance notes provided to officers.</b>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	<p>Agreed - Regular user groups of Mosaic users are in now place (since January 2019) which draw opinions from across the childrens' operational workforce on the development of Mosaic. This also provides an opportunity to explore the capabilities presented by the developments to the core functionality of the Mosaic product. A newsletter around Mosaic developments has recently been developed, this will continue.</p> <p>The implementation of the Signs of Safety work will provide a natural opportunity to revisit and review the existing system (and business) processes.</p> <p>A programme of developing a formal SharePoint site for guidance was jointly being undertaken by Business Support and the Performance Team; this work was halted following some staffing shortages. This will now be re-visited and a new delivery timetable drawn together, potentially aligning to the signs of safety workflow .</p>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Mosaic – Signs of Safety implementation	This needs to be in-line with the existing commitments around SoS			
Continuation of the Mosaic User Group, with associated development prioritisation processes.	Performance Team Lead	Ongoing	A clearer understanding of the product with a clear prioritised	

			list of developments	
Continued production of Mosaic Development newsletter for staff	Performance Team Lead	Ongoing	As above	
To develop a clear set of guidance to support system population; a timetable needs to be developed and delivered.	Performance Team Lead & Business Support Service Manager	TBC	Updated guidance on all current processes	A meeting is scheduled to look at developing a timetable for delivery of this guidance.

<b>Recommendation D</b>	<b>Managers continually persist in the use of timely recording of cases on the MOSAIC system as noted in recent court judgements. The T+F group welcomes the potential this has to improve reporting. The T+F group recommends that the head of paid services sets clear performance measures in work objectives (PPdPs) for officers using the MOSAIC system and that this becomes an area of performance management for staff and managers if those measures are not being met.</b>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	Agreed – Otter.ai Voice Notes (Otter) is being implemented and rolled out to front line members of staff and managers to use after visits, case supervision and personal supervision. Otter is a piece of voice dictation software that converts speech into text. Staff fed back that for every hour long visit, it takes 1 hour to type and record the visit on Mosaic. Otter significantly reduces the time to record visits and supervision, as well as improving timeliness and quality of recordings.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Trial to take place to test effectiveness of Otter	Business Support Development Manager	16/03/2019	DCS approved Otter rollout	Completed
Heads of Service to identify staff that require Otter	Heads of Service within Safeguarding and Family Support	13/04/2019	List of staff received from all HoS	Completed

Policy and procedure to be presented to and agreed by Information Governance	Business Support Development Manager and Information Governance	30/04/2019	Policy approved by IG	Completed
Schedule training and training to take place	Business Support Development Manager	31/07/2019	Various sessions have taken place in June	Ongoing – staggered approach, team by team

<b>Recommendation E</b>	<b>The T+F group recommends that the head of paid services must be clear, with supporting cost benefits analysis evidence provided, on the impact of any proposed cuts to children's and legal services.</b>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	Agreed, but there are no plans to cut either service areas at this time			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
There are no plans to make cuts to children's and legal services budgets. There would need to be careful consideration of the impact on children should cuts be required.	Chief Executive			

<b>Recommendation F</b>	<b>The T+F group welcomes the proactive approach through which advice from the courts, high court judges and Ofsted is now being utilised to make improvements to children's and legal services. The T+F group recommends that head of paid services welcomes the 'healthy challenge' between the authority, it's oversight bodies and scrutiny is encouraged and built in to the culture of staff working, through their work plans and objectives. If accepted, the children's scrutiny committee would welcome sight of the objectives set out in staff PPdPs.</b>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	agreed			

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
All service areas have an action plan with clear targets and timescales to make continued improvements to children's safeguarding services. Regular feedback is received from the Judiciary as to performance and practice of Herefordshire Children's safeguarding Services', and quality of work placed before the court. Regular meetings are held between Director and Assistance Director of children and families services, and Ofsted lead inspector.	Director and Assistant Director safeguarding and family support.	In place	Action plans will show progress against targets set.	Action plans signed off. Performance against targets May 2019 mixed, and not all targets met.

<b>Recommendation G</b>	<b>The T+F group recognise that there have been good improvements under the current leadership team – the judgement improvement plan, the Ofsted improvement plan and the authorities cultural values (particularly the amended whistle blowing policy) being clear examples of positive progress. The T+F group recommends that the head of paid services continue to prioritise embedding this 'culture change' and is given time to do this.</b>			
<b>HoPS Response</b>	agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
The current leadership team have continued to welcome feedback and learning to assist in creating an environment where scrutiny of performance and continuous improvement is norm. Whilst acknowledging this will take time to embed fully, plans are in place to continue with this	Chief Executive	In place	Feedback from staff indicates that they recognise changes have taken place. Performance measures demonstrate	Chief Executive and senior leaders continue to prioritise culture change by taking feedback from staff, visiting teams, following up on performance and engaging with cabinet and group leaders to regularly review service issues and performance.

			consistent improvement	
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