

Agenda

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 2 June 2020**

Time: **1.00 pm**

Place: **Online meeting only**

Notes: Please note this meeting will be streamed live on the Herefordshire Council YouTube channel. A recording will be made available shortly after the meeting has concluded.

<https://www.youtube.com/HerefordshireCouncil>

For any further information please contact:

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01432 383690

Email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 383690 or e-mail matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

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

Co-optees

Pat Burbidge **Church Representative - Archdiocese of Cardiff**
Andy James **Parent Governor Representative – SEND Sector**
Sam Pratley **Church Representative – Diocese of Hereford**

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence</p>	
2.	<p>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2020.</p>	7 - 18
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive written questions from members of the public. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 27 May. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to: councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</i></p>	
6.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>To receive written questions from members of the council. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 27 May. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to: councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</i></p>	
7.	<p>REVIEW OF PEER ON PEER ABUSE CASES</p> <p>To provide the outcome of the review into cases of peer on peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.</p>	19 - 70
8.	<p>REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019/2020</p> <p>To review performance against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan 2019/20.</p>	71 - 154
9.	<p>CHILD EXPLOITATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP - OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>To receive the outcomes and recommendations of the child exploitation task and finish group.</p>	155 - 178
10.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW</p> <p>To review the attached work programme for 2020/21 and receive responses to the recommendations of the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review.</p>	179 - 210

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is on 28 July 2020.

|

Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Monday 16 March 2020 at 10.15 am

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

Councillors: Graham Andrews, Phillip Howells, Mike Jones

Co-optees: Mr Sam Pratley

In attendance: Councillor Felicity Norman, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Officers: Director Children and Families; Assistant Director Education Development and Skills; Head of Learning and Achievement; Statutory Scrutiny Officer

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Andrews, Mr Burbidge, Councillor Hey and Mr James.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 14 January are agreed as a correct record and are signed by the chairperson.

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 10)

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 11 - 12)

A copy of the Member question and written answers is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

45. SCHOOL EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE 2019

The committee received a report from the head of learning and achievement (HLA) concerning the examination performance from 2019. The HLA introduced the report and provided the presentation attached as appendix 1.

The principal points below were raised by the committee in the debate:

- It was requested that in future the presentation of the results in the report should be set against performance in earlier years to establish if there were any trends. *The*

director children and families (DCF) explained that this detail was available and could be circulated after the meeting.

- Performance in the primary phase was positive but there was concern over the performance in the secondary phase. *The HLA explained that it was difficult to compare the results for the secondary phase over a number of preceding years due to the change in examination methods.*
- It was queried whether the council was funding the local National leaders in education (NLEs). *The HLA confirmed that the council was helping fund the NLEs. The DCF explained that the school improvement team was a small resource and occasionally there was a need to 'buy-in' expertise.*
- The role of schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils was raised and if there was concern regarding the provision of this support locally. *The HLA explained that schools had a mental health lead and could provide counselling to pupils. There was also the provision of child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) which accepted referrals from schools. A selection of secondary schools had received funding to develop mental health and wellbeing provision; if the project was successful the provision could be introduced across all secondary schools from September 2020. The DCF highlighted the launch of the children and young people plan which had included examples of how the emotional wellbeing of pupils was being supported across the primary and secondary phases. It was explained that at a recent head teacher stakeholder event there had been a discussion on the need for greater work to be undertaken to define the mental health support that was available in the primary phase.*
- There was concern regarding pressures on local CAMHS and speech language therapy (SLT) services and the length of waiting lists. These were topics of importance to the scrutiny committee and were proposed as subjects of reviews in the forthcoming municipal year.
- The performance of the multi-academy trust over the previous year was raised. *The assistant director education development and skills (ADED&S) explained that there was assurance with the primary academies but the secondary academies were still posing some concern. It was acknowledged that a recent Ofsted inspection had contained areas of positivity with respect to the secondary schools.*
- The difficulty of recruitment for schools and the impact on standards of education was raised; it was posed that such difficulty would mirror problems in other sectors, such as the recruitment of social workers and health workers. *The ADED&S explained that this was an issue for schools particularly small establishments. There was also concern with the retention of senior leadership teams and there had been a proposal to share teams across different schools.*
- It was queried how the performance of the project focusing on the progress of boys at key stage 4 would be measured. *The HLA explained that the success of the project would be measured by the GCSE results achieved by the cohort, currently in year 9. Schools were required to report progress of the project to the Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership (HSIP).*
- Details of the Herefordshire Challenge were requested. *The ADED&S explained that the project was in an early stage of development and matched funding was currently being sought. The project sought to support work with senior and middle leadership teams at schools and bring underperforming schools together in a bid to improve standards in the next 1 - 2 years.*
- The impact of the coronavirus and potential closure of schools was raised and how the impact on the summer exams could be mitigated. *The ADED&S explained that current government guidance was that schools remained opened. Further national guidance would be acted upon but schools and pupils were currently continuing to prepare for exams and risk assessments were being completed. The secondary sector was well prepared for closures, the primary sector was making preparations and it was felt that special schools might need*

to close due to some of the underlying health risks that pupils at these schools may have. The DCF explained that there were concerns over the closure of schools and the impact on exams; revision and school work was more challenging from home. Schools were considering how to mitigate the impact of closures on the exam performance of students including remote working facilities. In the event of closures there was also a need to consider community support for children in receipt of free school meals (FSM), particularly where it was likely that the only hot meal such children were likely to receive was through school.

- *The numbers and nature of the group of children in receipt of FSM was queried. The HLA explained that the number of FSM children in full year cohorts of approximately 1,800 was around 200. The ADED&S explained that there were important subgroups identifiable in those children in receipt of FSM, including those with English as an additional language, and such subgroups were identifiable through data shared by schools.*

RESOLVED: That the committee:

- **Notes the report and the good results in key stage 1 and key stage 2; and**
- **Request that in future the presentation of the results is set against performance in earlier years.**

46. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2019/20

The committee received a report from the assistant director safeguarding and family support concerning progress against the safeguarding and family support improvement plan. The report which provided the outcomes from the end of quarter 3 was introduced by the DCF.

The principal points below were raised in the debate:

- *There was concern regarding the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) and not in suitable accommodation. It was proposed that the topic could be address by the scrutiny committee as a task and finish group or spotlight review. The DCF explained that currently 86% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation. The ADED&S was currently working on a project looking at NEETs and a briefing note would be circulated to the committee following the meeting.*
- *It was queried whether there was a reluctance on the part of employers in the county to employ care leavers or offer training opportunities. The cabinet member children and families explained that a 16+ member champion had been established to look into options for training and work experience for young people.*
- *The continuing difficulty to recruit social workers was raised. The DCF explained that problems around the recruitment of social workers were an underlying issue for the children and families directorate. A new assistant director would shortly be taking up a post who would focus on the social work academy and the long term objective to train and develop social workers from Herefordshire.*
- *The use of providers to undertake social work activities that were not statutory or crucial was raised. The DCF explained that business support was provided to social workers to undertake such tasks and voice recognition software had been provided to reduce the resource required for some tasks. This was kept under review and the current focus was on the prevention of the escalation of cases.*
- *The issue of the frequency of supervision was raised. The DCF explained that there were regular conversations between social workers and managers but the*

formality and recording of these meetings needed to improve. The issue was an area of focus with weekly reports on supervision and heads of service involved in supervision.

- In the previous item there was no mention of other organisations that provided services for NEETs and should they be part of discussions around key stage 5 plans. *The DCF explained that a specific response would be necessary, the further education team co-ordinated with the 16+ team to investigate training opportunities for 19 -21 year olds. It was acknowledged that there were a number of care leavers who were NEETs and were not benefitting from opportunities.*
- It was acknowledged that there were positive areas and accomplishments in performance against the improvement plan but that public perception was informed by a focus on those negative elements. It was felt that there should be attempts to accentuate and publicise those areas of progress that had been achieved. *The cabinet member children and families acknowledged that it was important to appreciate the achievements accomplishment however this should not diminish the work and improvements that were still required.*
- It was queried whether social worker agencies experienced similar trouble in the recruitment of social workers. *The DCF explained that difficulties in the recruitment of social workers was prevalent across the country with 6,000 vacancies in children's social care. There was a need to market Herefordshire to attract people and their partners to the county.*
- The visit to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) in Redbridge was raised and what best practice had been observed. *The DCF explained that the Redbridge MASH had a single front door with help and guidance provided at an early stage. The handling of multi-agency referral forms by Redbridge was also raised; cases without a significant risk of harm were dealt with using an alternative response to social care activity.*
- It was requested that in future details of the changes that that the directorate was trying to accomplish should be presented in a one page briefing document. The document should include details of the intention of a project, who was responsible for it and how change would be measured.
- It was requested that a briefing note on the mind of my own (MOMO) app be shared with the committee.
- It was proposed that in future all members of the children and young people scrutiny committee be invited to the performance challenge session. Issues raised during that session would inform the report to the scrutiny committee.
- The timing of meetings of the scrutiny committee would also be reconsidered to ensure that they were scheduled four weeks after the release of the quarterly report concerning the safeguarding and family support improvement plan.
- It was felt that the committee would benefit from continued sight of the quarterly self-evaluation.
- The intention to complete the review of historic peer on peer abuse cases by the end of March and to report the outcome to the meeting of the scrutiny committee in June was raised. If there was any slippage in the timeframe it was felt this needed to be clearly publicised. *The DCF explained that it was intended that the review would be completed within the timeframe outlined however there may be an impact from the coronavirus.*
- The child exploitation bid was queried. *The DCF explained that the bid had been successful and work would now be taken forward across agencies.*

RESOLVED: That the committee:

- **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.**

- requests a briefing note on the mind of my own (MOMO) app.
- proposes that all members of the children and young people scrutiny committee be invited to the performance challenge session.
- agrees that meetings are scheduled four weeks after the release of the quarterly report concerning the safeguarding and family support improvement plan.

47. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The committee considered its work programme 2020/21. It was explained that the police would be invited to the committee meeting that considered the youth justice plan and there would be a visit to the accommodation for care leavers once complete.

A scrutiny review concerning CAMHS and SLT would be added to the work programme.

The committee considered the recommendation tracker in the appendix to the work programme. The chairperson provided an update to explain the responses received from local MPs to letters concerning oral health in Herefordshire. The letter from the MP for North Herefordshire would be shared with the committee.

RESOLVED: That the work programme 2020/21 be approved subject to the inclusion of a review concerning CAMHS and SLT.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairperson

Appendix 1 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Ms Steel, Hereford	There have been three high profile failures by Children's Services in the last two years - the Section 20 cases, the twins adoption scandal, and the repeated failure to safeguard child victims of sexual abuse from their abusers in schools - and Ofsted continues to have significant concerns over the leadership and management of the Children's Directorate. How is the committee going to improve its own practices and processes to ensure that its scrutiny of the Children's Directorate can be more effective and useful?	Chairperson of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<p>Response:</p> <p>The committee remains open to influence on ways in which it can continue to improve and strengthen its role to scrutinise the social care and safeguarding of all of the children in the council's care and within the county. In relation to the specific cases outlined in this question; the Children and Young People scrutiny committee has taken direct action in response to the Section 20 cases, the court judgements relating to two adoption cases and undertaken a public 'spotlight' review into all forms of peer on peer abuse, including peer on peer sexual abuse.</p> <p>In regard to the Section 20 cases a task and finish group conducted an evidence led investigation looking at section 20 orders, the processes in place to ensure their appropriate use and to conduct analysis on case samples. From their findings, the task and finish group made 8 recommendations (weblink), 1 recommendation to the children and young people scrutiny committee and 7 recommendations to the executive. All of the recommendations were accepted and actions were agreed for all of them. The executive's response can be found here (weblink).</p> <p>In the court judgements on the adoption cases a task and finish group conducted an evidence led investigation based around the rulings set out in the court judgments and the Ofsted inspection and resulting action plan. The group met on three occasions receiving expert input from officers who were intrinsically involved with the adoption. As a result of those discussions the task and finish group made 14 recommendations (weblink) in regard to the high court judgement concerning children and families. The executive responded to each of those recommendations, accepting and agreeing to action all of them. The executive's response can be found here (weblink).</p> <p>For the spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools (weblink), the committee agreed to undertake this review due to reports of increasing levels of peer on peer abuse and public concern at schools in Herefordshire. From their findings, the spotlight review made 12 recommendations, 9 were directed to the executive to respond to, 2 were directed to the scrutiny committee to respond to and 1 related to drafting a letter to the Department for Education to outline the comments of witnesses at the spotlight review concerning existing peer on peer abuse guidance for schools. The executive response is being prepared and is expected to be published in April.</p> <p>On a point of correction. The last Ofsted focused visit clearly set out areas for improvement that the service is addressing, whilst also noting some areas of strength including quality of supervision of the children with disabilities. No priority areas for action were set out in the letter following the Ofsted focused visit. There are strong areas of performance from our children and families directorate and leadership, including the work with schools and education settings to achieve a range of performance that is the best in the West Midlands and statistical neighbours, such as key stage 2 primary results. Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities approach in Herefordshire was rated second in the country last year by IMPOWER in terms of value for money and outcomes.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p>			

Ms Steel's supplementary question was disallowed as it risked the identification of an individual (4.5.102 (g) Herefordshire Council constitution).

PQ 2	Ms Liddle, Ledbury	It was agreed in late November 2019 that a full review of all cases of peer on peer sexual assault since October 2016 was needed to ensure that all child victims of peer on peer sexual assault had been properly safeguarded and no child was still at risk of harm. How is the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee planning to scrutinise the length of time it has taken to complete this review, the methodology and the outcomes?	Chairperson of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
------	-----------------------	--	---

Response:
Following [the spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools](#) (weblink), it was recommended that the executive provides the outcome of the current review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer to peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to the spotlight review and the children and young people scrutiny committee. It was agreed to review cases from Jan 2017 onwards, this review will be concluded by the end of March. As part of the children and young people's scrutiny work programme a report will be received on the review.

In addition, the spotlight review recommended that the children and young people scrutiny committee agree a further meeting of the spotlight review to consider a greater level of data to provide a more informed understanding of the scale and complexity of peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire; the outcomes of the review will support this objective. Once the review has been concluded and the outcomes are made available, an item will be added to the children and young people scrutiny committee work programme for consideration at a future committee meeting.

Of note is the response received from the Ofsted focussed visit which stated that *'The local authority has worked closely with schools to ensure 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'*.

Supplementary question:
Does the committee think it acceptable that four months will elapse, until the outcomes of the review of peer on peer abuse are available, before children at risk of harm are identified?

Response:

Cabinet member children and families: The review was being conducted in a thorough manner and would take time. A number of staff had been committed to the task and there had been the interruption of the Ofsted inspection in January. There was no reason to consider that children were currently at risk.

Director children and families: The review involved checking 550 records since 2017 that alleged sexual harm and required significant resource and time to complete. A written response to the supplementary question would be provided.

Chairperson children and young people scrutiny committee: The Ofsted inspection in January was satisfied that peer on peer abuse cases were being handled in a correct manner.

Appendix 2 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Jeremy Milln	Referring to Ofsted's letter of 21 st January following its 18 th December inspection of Herefordshire's children's services what is the leadership team doing to understand and address key shortcomings in its own management and supervision of staff? For example it would be a good idea to give an opportunity for leavers (anonymously and via 3 rd parties if need be) to feed back their experience of employment with Herefordshire Council and share their reasons for leaving. Social workers are like teachers: before applying for a job they check the Ofsted report. We cannot hope to attract and retain experienced staff to a service where leadership, support and management are seen as deficient.	Cabinet member children and families

Response:

Referring to Ofsted's letter of 21st January following its 18th December inspection of Herefordshire's children's services what is the leadership team doing to understand and address key shortcomings in its own management and supervision of staff?

Response; Key performance information is available to heads of service on a weekly basis, to enable them to drill down with team managers into the performance of individual teams. Data is provided at mid-month point as to the % of social workers that have received supervision, so heads of service have oversight of how many supervisions are required in that month, and can have these conversations with team managers accordingly.

To have an overview on the quality of supervision, heads of service are required to observe two supervision sessions per quarter.

The Assistant Director chairs monthly performance meetings with heads of service.

The Director chairs quarterly performance challenge sessions with AD and Heads of service, and from April, team managers will be attending these meetings as well.

It would be a good idea to give an opportunity for leavers (anonymously and via 3rd parties if need be) to feed back their experience of employment with Herefordshire Council and share their reasons for leaving.

Response; All leavers are offered an exit interview. In the last twelve months, there have been six social work employees that have left Herefordshire County Council.

There have been a number of employees that have moved posts within the council; the data on this is being pulled together by HR.

The confirmation of resignation letter details that staff should complete the exit survey online or if they prefer they can request a face to face exit interview. Only 1 person completed the online survey.

We cannot hope to attract and retain experienced staff to a service where leadership, support and management are seen as deficient.

Response; The focused visit in January 2019 evaluated one service area. There is now a new Head of Service in post in this service area who took up post the week after Ofsted had conducted their visit. They are aware of the challenges in the service area and are making every effort to address these. We are working with Essex County Council, as performance improvement partners, to learn from them and develop approaches which can drive up the quality of practice

We are implementing signs of safety to help embed strengths based practice and improve our service offer to children and families.

Recruitment is challenging against a national shortage of social workers, and we acknowledge adverse publicity can impact on this. However, prior to the Ofsted visit, recruitment drives and initiatives were not successful in attracting experienced social workers to work in Hereford, and we are now actively recruiting newly qualified social workers in an attempt to “grow our own” social workers for the future. We also have six people who commenced the social work apprenticeship scheme with the Open University in February 2019.



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Tuesday 2 June 2020
Title of report:	Review of peer on peer abuse cases
Report by:	Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide the outcome of the review (including lessons learned) into peer on peer abuse cases referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The committee reviews the outcome of the review and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive.**

Alternative options

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 arising from the spotlight review asked for the outcomes of the review into peer on peer abuse cases referred to the MASH to be presented to the committee, which this report provides.
3. A report was commissioned as part of Herefordshire Council's response to cases of peer on peer sexual abuse. (Appendix 1). It is part of efforts to both review and strengthen safeguarding within the county. There are other aspects that also take place. For example, additional training for safeguarding leads in school, additional guidance provided which reflects the updated national guidance and the multi-agency NSPCC audit into harmful sexual behaviour being undertaken by the Herefordshire Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership.
4. The methodology involved reviewing over 300 cases reported to MASH and identifying peer on peer sexual abuse cases from the period January 2017-November 2019 where pupils attended the same schools. 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 (Appendix 2).
5. The local authority's role is the provision of support, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding in 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.
6. 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. It covered the years Jan 2017- Oct 18 and Oct 2018 – Nov 19.
7. 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 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.

Community impact

8. 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

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

- 9 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.
- 10 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

- 11 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

- 12 There are no legal implications of the outcomes of this review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse.

Risk management

- 13 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

- 14 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 - Sexual harassment and Sexual Violence in schools and colleges was implemented in December 2017 (Department for Education)

Background papers - None identified

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

May 2020

Introduction

This review was commissioned as part of Herefordshire Council's assurance on the steps being taken to assist educational settings dealing with peer on peer sexual abuse allegations.

Scope

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. Once identified the advice on each case was reviewed in light of national guidance from the Department for Education (DFE) at the time to assess if the advice was compliant. The educational setting was then contacted to confirm if the advice was followed and/ or what action was taken as a result of the referral.

The review was undertaken by independent reviewing officers, heads of service, the principal social worker, the quality assurance manager and the case progression officer in the children and families directorate.

Contacting the schools/colleges where this was necessary was led by the assistant director education, development and skills and involved staff within that part of the directorate.

Executive Summary

The role of the local authority with schools and process for MASH

A multi-agency referral form is completed by educational settings when referring a child/young person to Children's Social Care for assessment as a child in need of support services, child protection; or accommodation (to become looked after).

To assist the professional in the educational setting whether a referral to social care is the correct option for the child guidance is available in the Herefordshire Levels of Needs document established by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB). This make clear that referrals should only be made for those children at the threshold of level 4 where a setting is extremely concerned for the child's safety based on evidence of abuse or neglect or disclosure by the child.

All peer on peer Multi Agency Referral Form (MARFs) that are submitted to the MASH have been investigated by a Social Worker in respect of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. The MASH Social Worker will be expected to consider a checklist to ensure safety planning and what support is or could be put in place. A social care manager will make a decision within 24 hours on how to progress the contact/referral. Regardless whether a threshold is met however advice will be given in accordance with the DFE guidance to the setting in line with the guidance now about risk assessments and separating the pupils.

October 2018 – November 2019

The identification of cases

- **18** cases were identified that involved a form of sexualised peer on peer abuse where a perpetrator(s) attended the same educational setting as the victim(s).

- One did not meet the sexual violence definition used for this review (i.e alleged sexual assault and / or rape).
- Four 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.

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

- The DFE guidance on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in schools and colleges that applied during this period was the December 2017 version as updated in May 2018. It essentially centres on the need for completing risk assessments or a safety plan in cases of sexual violence and schools being advised to refer to another service which may include the police or children and young people's sexual advisors (ChISVAs)
- In 13 of the 18 cases the advice given by MASH complied with the guidance and was recorded fully:
- In 5 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 fully.
- In 1 case (of the 5) the review found that safety planning and the need for risk assessments was not recorded as being discussed by the MASH.

In two of these 5 incidents this was because the disclosures were about historic incidents that had occurred two or more years before the disclosure was made.

In one of these two incidents, there was no disclosure and the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim did remain in the same school for a month. This situation was resolved when one of them subsequently left the school - the actual disclosure was made a considerable time afterwards.

In the second historic case no advice was given although the school is believed to have acted appropriately.

In the remaining 3 cases in which record keeping was not fully compliant, the school had either already implemented safety plans/risk assessments and/or referred on to another agency before needing to be advised.

- The advice reviewed was reasonable and deemed to be appropriate in the remaining 13 cases. Of the 5 reported above there is 1 case where there was no record of the case being discussed by the MASH and a further case where advice was not given as action had by then been taken.

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

- The advice given in the remaining 13 cases (i.e the 18 identified as within the time frame of October 2018-November 2019) less the 5 discussed above) was followed by 12 schools.
- In one case, although advised, a written risk assessment was not completed by the school, the school did ensure that the two pupils were in separate classes.
- This failure to record the risk assessment had already been discovered as part of a safeguarding visit from Herefordshire Council education team on 13th December 2019.

As a result the school has already been advised in writing about the requirements to undertake written risk assessments and expectations regarding how incidents of sexualised violence should be dealt with.

- To avoid this happening again in another setting, consideration has been given to asking schools to send the risk assessments to the Education MASH team. In the one case where there was no record of advice being given we have used this as part of the lessons to learn work that has taken place subsequently in training with designated safeguarding leads.
- 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.

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.

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 advise to refer to another service
- No advice was recorded as given in 8 of the 10 recorded cases in relation to the national 2018 guidance as these cases preceded the guidance being given. However 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. The schools took what actions they deemed to be appropriate given the guidance in place at the time.
- In the two cases where advice was recorded as given, once the guidance was in place, it suggests appropriate advice was given regarding referrals to other agencies for support. In one of the two cases it states that a social worker gave advice to the school regarding the supervision of the children in school. There is also an ongoing 'live case' and the school now has a risk assessment in place although at the time of the initial referral into the MASH, this wasn't advised. In the second case advice was given and acted on appropriately.

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

- The two schools who were given advice were contacted to confirm if they had followed the advice given. In both cases the schools had followed the advice to refer to other services: the police and a health visitor. Support was also put in place by one school which is ongoing (a live case) which includes the NSPCC PANTS programme and the New Start Network from Shropshire.

Summary

The review has provided the following assurance-

- Where advice was given and recorded, it was found to be the correct advice, based on the guidance from the DfE at the time.
- Only one setting did not follow the advice.
- Record keeping is improving but MASH must ensure that all advice given to schools relating to peer on peer abuse is in MOSAIC
- We have also undertaken a 'lessons learned' exercise which rests on discussions with Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Next steps

- The council has committed to keeping training and guidance to schools as 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 as part of the spotlight review undertaken by the council 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 required as a result of the findings of the NSPCC audit work when they are received. 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.

May 2020.



Department
for Education

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

**Advice for governing bodies, proprietors,
headteachers, principals, senior
leadership teams and designated
safeguarding leads**

May 2018

Contents

Summary	3
About this advice	3
Part one: What do we mean by sexual violence and sexual harassment between children?	6
Context	6
Sexual violence	8
Sexual harassment	9
Harmful sexual behaviour	10
Part two: What are schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities?	12
Legal responsibilities and equality policies	12
Part three: A whole school or college approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment	15
A whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection	15
Safeguarding training	15
The role of education in prevention	16
Part four: Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment	19
Introduction	19
Support for schools and colleges	19
The immediate response to a report	21
Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment	25
Ongoing response	34
Safeguarding and supporting the victim	34
Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator	38
Annex A: Further information and support	42

Summary

About this advice

This is advice provided by the Department for Education (the department). Its focus is child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment at schools and colleges. The advice covers children of **all ages**, from the primary through secondary stage and into colleges. For the purposes of this advice, a child is anyone under the age of 18. Whilst the focus of the advice is on protecting and supporting children, schools and colleges should of course protect any adult students and engage with adult social care, support services and the police as required.

The advice sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring and what to do when it does occur, or is alleged to have occurred.

The advice highlights best practice and cross-references other advice, statutory guidance and the legal framework. It is for individual schools and colleges to develop their own policies and procedures. It is important that policies and procedures are developed in line with their legal obligations, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, especially the Public Sector Equality Duty.¹ It is important that schools and colleges consider how to reflect sexual violence and sexual harassment in their whole school or college approach to safeguarding and in their child protection policy.

The advice provides case studies. These are not intended to offer a step-by-step guide, but to provide an indication of some of the many options that are available.

The department has updated this advice in line with the revised statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will continue to keep the advice under review, particularly as we develop our approach to Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education.²

Who this advice is for

This advice is for:

- Governing bodies of maintained schools and colleges;³

¹ The PSED is a legal requirement for schools and colleges that are public bodies.

² [Department statement on RSE and PSHE.](#)

³ 'college' means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and institutions designated as being within the further education sector under section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 ('designated institutions').

- Proprietors⁴ of independent schools (including academies, free schools and alternative provision academies) and non-maintained special schools;
- Management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs);
- Headteachers, Principals and Senior Leadership Teams; and
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (and their deputies).

Other advice and guidance

This advice should not be read in isolation. It is important for schools and colleges to consider other relevant advice and guidance, including the following (which is not intended to be an exhaustive list), as part of their approach to protecting children from sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- [Exclusions From Maintained Schools, Academies and PRUs](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Sex and Relationship Education](#) (statutory guidance for maintained schools and academies)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Children Missing Education](#) (advice for schools)
- [Cyberbullying](#) (advice for schools)
- [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (advice for schools)
- [Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance](#) (advice for further and higher education providers)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) (provides advice on avoiding discrimination in a variety of educational contexts)
- [UKCCIS Sexting advice](#) (advice for schools and colleges)

⁴ In the case of academies and free school trusts, the proprietor will be the trust.

Victims and alleged perpetrators

There are many different ways to describe children who have been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment and many ways to describe those who are alleged to have carried out any form of abuse.

For the purposes of this advice, we use the term 'victim'. It is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that schools and colleges recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, schools and colleges should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

For the purpose of this advice we use the term 'alleged perpetrator' and where appropriate 'perpetrator'. These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate to aid effective drafting of advice. However, schools and colleges should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children. As above, the use of appropriate terminology will be for schools and colleges to determine, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

Part one: What do we mean by sexual violence and sexual harassment between children?

Context

1. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any age and sex**. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

2. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

3. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

The evidence

4. The evidence highlights why it is important that all school and college staff have an understanding of what sexual violence and sexual harassment might look like and what to do if they have a concern or receive a report. Whilst **any** report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff should be aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.

- The Women and Equalities committee (WEC) found a number of large scale surveys find girls consistently reporting high levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and colleges.⁵
- Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey 2017 found 64% of girls aged 13-21 had experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment at school or college in the past year. This included 39% having their bra strap pulled by a boy and 27% having their skirts pulled up within the last week.⁶

⁵ [WEC report- paragraph 13](#)

⁶ [Girlguiding's Girls' Attitude Survey 2017](#)

- Over a third (37%) of female students and 6% of male students at mixed-sex schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school.⁷
- Almost a quarter (24%) of female students and 4% of male students at mixed-sex schools have been subjected to unwanted physical touching of a sexual nature while at school.⁸
- Girls (14%) were significantly more likely than boys (7%) to report that their partner had pressured them to share nude images of themselves in the last year.⁹
- Girls are significantly more likely to be victimised with unwanted sexual messages and images from their peers online, with 31% of female respondents aged 13-17 years saying they had experienced this in the last year compared to 11% of male respondents.¹⁰
- In 2016/17 the NSPCC childline service provided over 3000 counselling sessions to children and young people concerned about being sexually assaulted by their peers.¹¹

What schools and colleges should be aware of

5. Schools and colleges should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”;
- challenging behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them; and
- understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language. This is why a whole school/college approach (especially preventative education) as described in Part 3 of this advice is important.

⁷ [NEU and UKfeminista Report It's Just Everywhere](#)

⁸ [NEU and UKfeminista Report It's Just Everywhere](#)

⁹ [Project deSHAME: Young people's experiences of online sexual harassment](#)

¹⁰ [Project deSHAME: Young people's experiences of online sexual harassment](#)

¹¹ [NSPCC Helplines Report](#)

6. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.¹² Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties overcoming these barriers.

7. Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) and the SENCO or the named person with oversight for SEN in a college.

8. Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT) can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

9. Whilst not the focus of this advice, schools and colleges should be aware that their staff can be victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Schools and colleges should have arrangements in place to protect their staff from such abuse, including clear reporting and support mechanisms.

Sexual violence

10. It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence in this advice, we do so in the context of child on child sexual violence.

11. For the purpose of this advice, when referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003¹³ as described below:

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

¹² Jones, L et al. (2012) Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. The Lancet July 2012.

¹³ [Legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)

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.

12. **What is consent?**¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;¹⁶
- the age of consent is 16;¹⁷
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment

13. For the purpose of this advice, when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so 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.

14. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment 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;

¹⁴ It is important school and college staff (and especially designated safeguarding leads and their deputies) understand consent. This will be especially important if a child is reporting they have been raped. More information: [here](#)

¹⁵ [PSHE Teaching about consent](#) from the PSHE association provides advice and lesson plans to teach consent at Key stage 3 and 4.

¹⁶ See [CPS Guidance](#) which explains why under 13s are given additional protections in law due to their age and vulnerability.

¹⁷ It is important to differentiate between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age and that which involves any power imbalance, coercion or exploitation. Due to their additional training, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be involved and generally speaking leading the school or college response. If in any doubt, they should seek expert advice.

- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.¹⁸ It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos. ([UKCCIS](#) sexting advice provides detailed advice for schools and colleges);
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

15. It is important that schools and colleges consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour

16. Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour". The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. **Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or offline and can also occur simultaneously between the two.** Harmful sexual behaviour should be considered in a child protection context.

17. When considering harmful sexual behaviour, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.¹⁹ However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have

¹⁸ [Project deSHAME](#) from Childnet provides useful research, advice and resources regarding online sexual harassment.

¹⁹ [Davies, 2012](#)

power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled²⁰ or smaller in stature. See [NSPCC: Harmful sexual behaviour](#) for more information on what is harmful sexual behaviour.

18. Detailed advice on harmful sexual behaviour is available from the specialist sexual violence sector: contact [Rape Crisis](#) or [the Survivors Trust](#) for details of the nearest centre. [NICE guidance](#) for advice on, amongst other things: developing interventions; working with families and carers; and multi-agency working. The University of Bedfordshire has developed a range of resources to support schools and colleges to address harmful sexual behaviour, see: [HSB Resources](#). The [Brook sexual behaviours traffic light tool](#) can help when considering harmful sexual behaviour.

19. It is effective safeguarding practice for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) to have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour. This could form part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in planning preventative education, implementing preventative measures, drafting and implementing an effective child protection policy and incorporating the approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment into the whole school or college approach to safeguarding.

20. Harmful sexual behaviour **can**, in some cases, progress on a continuum.²¹ Addressing inappropriate behaviour **can** be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.²² It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

²⁰ [Rich, 2011](#)

²¹ [NSPCC and Research in Practice harmful sexual behaviour framework](#) discusses the continuum harmful behaviour can progress on (Hackett 2010 continuum model).

²² [Hackett et al 2013](#) study of children and young people with harmful sexual behaviour suggests that two-thirds had experienced some kind of abuse or trauma.

Part two: What are schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities?

21. Schools and colleges have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children at their school/college.²³ As part of this duty, schools and colleges are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.²⁴ All schools and colleges must have regard to [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

22. All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy²⁵ and measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

23. All maintained secondary schools must teach sex and relationship education (SRE). Any school required to teach it, or academies and state-funded schools that choose to teach it, must follow the SRE [Statutory Guidance](#).²⁶

Legal responsibilities and equality policies

24. Schools and colleges should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA).

- It is unlawful for schools and colleges to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights include:
 - Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right);
 - Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity;

²³ Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires governing bodies of maintained schools and colleges, in relation to their functions relating to the conduct of the school or the institution to make arrangements for ensuring that such functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are either pupils at the school or receiving education or training at the institution. The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 apply a duty to proprietors of independent schools (which include academies and free schools) to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 oblige non-maintained special schools to comply with certain requirements as a condition of their approval and whilst approved by the Secretary of State. One condition of approval is that the proprietor must make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils, which have regard to any guidance including where appropriate, the National Minimum Standards, about safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils and, in the case of schools already approved that these arrangements at the school with respect to these matters are in accordance with the approval given by the Secretary of State. For colleges, non-maintained special schools and independent schools, the definition of 'children' applies to the statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children i.e. those under 18.

²⁴ Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015.

²⁵ [behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools-guidance-for-governing-bodies](#)

²⁶ [Supplementary guidance](#) is available from PSHE Association, Brook and the Sex Education Forum.

- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination;²⁷ and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to an effective education.

Being subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances.

25. Schools and colleges are required to comply with relevant requirements as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) see [advice for schools](#) and [advice for further and higher education](#).

- According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- Whilst all of the above protections are important, in the context of this advice schools and colleges should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to their sex, sexuality and if appropriate gender reassignment.
- Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting one group. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Considerations

Schools and colleges should consider the makeup of their own pupil and student body, including the gender and age range of its pupils and students, and whether additional support for children with protected characteristics (who are potentially at greater risk) is appropriate. For example, school and college policies should reflect the gendered nature abuse can take. The evidence shows that girls are more likely to be subject to sexual violence and sexual harassment than boys, and that boys are more likely to perpetrate such violence and harassment. Schools and colleges should consider what they can do to foster healthy and respectful relationships between boys and girls including through Relationship and Sex Education and Personal Social Health and Economic education.

²⁷ As a matter of law, Article 14 only applies where the act complained of falls within the ambit of another Convention right, but in this context it should always be assumed that either through Article 8 or Article 2 of Protocol 1, or both, Article 14 will be engaged.

Schools and colleges should ensure that their response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the same sex is equally robust as it is for sexual violence and sexual harassment between children of the opposite sex.

26. Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a legal requirement for schools and colleges that are public bodies.

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides the following general guidance for schools that are subject to the [PSED](#).
- Under the PSED, schools and colleges that are public bodies have a general duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and to foster good relations between different groups. The duty applies to all protected characteristics and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought must be given to the equality implications such as, for example, the elimination of sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Whilst compliance with the PSED is a legal requirement for schools and colleges that are public bodies, meeting it also makes good educational sense. The PSED helps schools and colleges to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. For example, where girls are being routinely sexually harassed, not only is the victim of sexual harassment being discriminated against, she is also very likely to have her equality of opportunity adversely affected by its impact on her education.
- An important aspect of the PSED is that schools and colleges need to consider what information they need to have relevant due regard to. This is one reason why good record-keeping and monitoring of sexual violence and sexual harassment reports is essential.

Part three: A whole school or college approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

A whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection

27. The best schools and colleges take a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection. This means involving everyone in the school or college, including the governing body or proprietor, all the staff, children, adult students and parents and carers.

28. Safeguarding and child protection should be a recurrent theme running through policies and procedures. The schools or college's approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment should reflect and be part of the broader approach to safeguarding.

29. The schools or college's safeguarding procedures with regard to sexual violence and sexual harassment should be transparent, clear and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents and carers.

Contextual Safeguarding

30. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. Additional information regarding contextual safeguarding is available here: [Contextual safeguarding](#).

Safeguarding training

31. Decisions relating to teachers' professional development rightly rest with schools, colleges, headteachers, principals and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to assess their individual requirements and also take into consideration local priorities and local issues. The Standard for Teachers' Professional Development is here: [teachers' professional development](#).

32. As per Part one of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), as part of their child

protection and safeguarding training, schools and colleges should consider the importance of their staff being aware of the different types of abuse and neglect. Equally important is that staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child, how to respond to a report of abuse, how to offer support to children and where to go to if they need support.

The role of education in prevention

33. Schools and colleges can play an important role in preventative education. [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) sets out that all schools and colleges should ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including how to stay safe online. Schools should consider this as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

A planned curriculum as part of a whole school approach

34. The most effective preventative education programme will be through a whole-school approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. The school will have a clear set of values and standards, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum. Such a programme should be developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering SEND children and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as:

- healthy and respectful relationships;
- what respectful behaviour looks like;
- consent;²⁸
- gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

35. Schools often deliver this currently, through planned, high-quality, Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE)

²⁸ [PSHE Teaching about consent](#) from the PSHE association provides advice and lesson plans to teach consent at Key stage 3 and 4.

education programmes. More information about PSHE can be found [here](#). The PSHE Association provides guidance to schools on developing their PSHE curriculum. See: www.pshe-association.org.uk. Colleges often do this via tutorials.

36. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a duty on the Secretary of State to make Relationships Education compulsory for all pupils receiving primary education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE, to replace sex education) compulsory for all pupils receiving secondary education. It also gave the Secretary of State a power to make PSHE, or elements therein, compulsory in all schools. The decision regarding PSHE is subject to further careful consideration. The department is currently engaging with experts, schools, parents and young people to determine what these subjects will look like and whether or not to make PSHE, or elements therein, compulsory. This will be followed by a formal consultation on regulations and guidance before the new subjects are made compulsory.

37. Good practice allows children an open forum to talk things through. Such discussions can lead to increased safeguarding reports. Children should be made aware of the processes to raise their concerns or make a report and how any report will be handled. This should include processes when they have a concern about a friend or peer. All staff should be aware of how to support children and how to manage a safeguarding report from a child (as per paragraph 17 of Keeping Children safe in Education).

Specialist support and interventions

38. As part of their approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, schools and colleges should consider carefully if external input is necessary. This might be to train and/or support their staff, teach their children and/or provide support to their children.

39. Specialist organisations can offer a different perspective and expert knowledge. It is good practice for schools and colleges to assure themselves of the quality of any specialist provider with whom they engage. This may take the form of written testimonials or engaging with a provider that is well known and established. See Annex A for a list of some of the available specialist support services.

CASE STUDY: Preventative Education

A School and Sixth Form Centre provides extensive learning on relationships through a spiral PSHE education curriculum, based on the PSHE Association's programme of study. Their schemes of work build on prior knowledge, with the importance of healthy relationships developed during earlier years and a focus on specific aspects – including teen relationship violence, sexual exploitation and coercion – at an appropriate stage.

The school's approach is a good illustration of how this kind of education supports healthy relationships and challenges attitudes that can grow into disrespect and even violence if unchallenged. For instance, this school year they are working on changing stereotypical attitudes and developing media literacy skills through PSHE lessons that explore the use of sexualised language and images that can support such attitudes and reduce respect for others.

Carefully chosen external contributors are occasionally used to supplement the planned PSHE curriculum in these areas, with timetabled lessons providing the context for both preparatory work and reinforcement of the learning. Before-and-after evaluations of this combined classroom work and external contributions are undertaken to assess levels of increased understanding.

The school describes the skills and attributes developed through PSHE education as having a demonstrable impact on students. For example, it develops skills to understand what constitutes abusive behaviour; communication skills to convey difficult messages; and developing empathy to foster respect for others and the ability to see the world from others' perspective. PSHE education lessons always include activities that allow teachers and students to gauge, demonstrate and/or reflect on their learning and progress.

The school PSHE lead puts this success down to a number of factors, including:

- ensuring a spiral PSHE curriculum that enables a return to the same core themes in different ways according to age and stage of development, therefore building on prior learning;
- a whole school approach, with PSHE including RSE complementing relevant school policies and initiatives; and
- supportive school leadership, a trained and confident PSHE education team, as well as an understanding amongst the wider staff team of the importance of this work.

Part four: Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Introduction

40. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex, requiring difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning, effective training and effective policies will provide schools and colleges with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any report.

41. This part of the advice does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what to do in any or every particular case. The advice provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for schools and colleges to consider in their decision making process.

42. Ultimately, any decisions are for the school or college to make on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) taking a leading role, using their professional judgement and being supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

Support for schools and colleges

43. Schools and colleges should not feel that they are alone in dealing with sexual violence and sexual harassment.

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) sets out details of the wider child protection system, inter-agency working and schools' and colleges' role in it.
- **Part one of** [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (which all school and college staff should read) and [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) provide information for all staff on indicators to look out for and advice on what they should do if they have concerns about a child.
- **The police** will be important partners where a crime might have been committed. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting principle is that this should be referred on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach in these cases.
 - Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to children's social care. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should be leading the schools or college's response and should be aware of

the local process for referrals to children's social care and making referrals to the police.

- Many schools and colleges have close relationships with their local police force and many police forces have a permanent or semi-permanent police presence in schools and colleges. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be liaising closely with the local police presence, where there is one.
- **The NSPCC** provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies).
- Support from **specialist sexual violence sector organisations** such as [Rape Crisis](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#).
- **The Anti-Bullying Alliance** has developed guidance for schools about [preventing and responding to sexual bullying](#).
- **Online:** Schools and colleges should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection to offline incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. These include the potential for the incident to take place across a number of social media platforms and services, and for things to move from platform to platform online. It also includes the potential for the impact of the incident to extend further than a schools or college's local community (e.g. for images or content to be shared around neighbouring schools/colleges) and for a victim (or alleged perpetrator) to become marginalised and excluded by both online and offline communities. There is also the strong potential for repeat victimisation in the future if abusive content continues to exist somewhere online. Online concerns can be especially complicated. Support is available at:
 - **The UK Safer Internet Centre** provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk. The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) when a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment includes an online element.
 - **Internet Watch Foundation:** If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed through the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF). The IWF will make an assessment of whether the image is illegal in line with UK Law. If the image is assessed to be illegal, it will be removed and added to the IWF's Image Hash list.
 - **UKCCIS Sexting advice:** Sharing indecent images of a child (including by

children) is a crime: [UKCCIS advice](#) provides support to schools and colleges in responding to reports of sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).

- [Thinkuknow](#) from CEOP provides support for the children's workforce, parents and carers on staying safe online.
- Additional information including various avenues of support are set out in **Annex A** of this advice.

44. Effective safeguarding practice is for schools and colleges to be clear, in advance, as to what local processes are in place and what support can be accessed when sexual violence or sexual harassment has occurred. It is important to prepare for this in advance and review this information on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date. As such:

- if required, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and children's social care colleagues in order to prepare the schools or college's policies (especially the child protection policy) and responses; and
- the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) should be confident as to what local specialist support is available to support all of the children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment and be confident as to how to access this support when required.

The immediate response to a report

Responding to the report

45. The school or college's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

46. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed. As with all safeguarding concerns, it is important that in such instances staff take appropriate action in accordance with their child protection policy. They should not assume that someone else is responding to any incident or concern. If in any doubt, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). In such cases, the basic safeguarding principles remain the same, but it is important for the school or college to understand why the victim has chosen not to make a report themselves. This discussion should be handled sensitively and with the support of children's social care if required.

47. There may be reports where the alleged sexual violence or sexual harassment involves pupils or students from the same school or college, but is alleged to have taken place away from the school or college premises, or online. There may also be reports where the children concerned attend two or more different schools or colleges. The safeguarding principles, and individual schools' and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils and students, remain the same. The same principles and processes as set out from paragraph 48 will apply. In such circumstances, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be especially important.

48. As per Part one of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), all staff should be trained to manage a report. Local policies (and training) will dictate exactly how reports should be managed. However, effective safeguarding practice includes:

- not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to;
- recognising a child is likely to disclose information to someone they trust: this could be **anyone** on the school or college staff. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child;
- listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc.;
- considering the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes, especially if a second member of staff is present. However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, it is essential a written record is made;
- only recording the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Schools and colleges should be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation;
- where the report includes an online element, being aware of [searching screening](#)

[and confiscation](#) advice (for schools) and [UKCCIS](#) sexting advice (for schools and colleges). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.

- if possible, managing reports with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy). However, this might not always be possible; and
- informing the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

Considering confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality

49. Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interests of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.

50. The school or college should only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.

51. The victim may ask the school or college not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if it can be justified to be in the public interest, for example, to protect children from harm and to promote the welfare of children. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider the following:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk);
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to children's social care; and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

52. Ultimately, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

53. If the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) do decide to go ahead and make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

54. Additional information on confidentiality and information sharing is available at [Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Advice](#) and [NSPCC: Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners](#).

Anonymity

55. Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, schools and colleges should be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately.²⁹ Information is at: [CPS: Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses](#).

56. As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, schools and colleges should do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of **any** children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

57. Schools and colleges should also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. The unique challenges regarding social media are discussed at paragraph 43, along with potential support. In addition, the principles described in [Childnet's cyberbullying guidance](#) could be helpful.

Risk Assessment

58. When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;
- the alleged perpetrator; and
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or

²⁹It is not the role of schools and colleges to provide legal advice or support to victims, alleged perpetrators or parents in respect of a criminal justice process. Rather, schools and colleges should be aware of their own position and responsibilities.

college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them;

59. Risk assessments should be recorded (written or electronic) and should be kept under review. At all times, the school or college should be actively considering the risks posed to all their pupils and students and putting adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. Support referenced at paragraphs 17 and 18 (in the Harmful Sexual Behaviours section) could support the risk assessment process.

60. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. The risk assessment (at paragraph 58) is not intended to replace the detailed assessments of expert professionals. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the schools or college's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and students and updating their own risk assessment.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment

What to consider

61. Schools and colleges should carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the schools or college's initial response. Important considerations will include:

- the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- the nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour (as set out on paragraphs 16-20);
- the ages of the children involved;
- the developmental stages of the children involved;
- any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;
- is the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse?;

- are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff?; and
- other related issues and wider context.

62. As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff should act in the best interests of the child. In all cases, schools and colleges should follow general safeguarding principles as per [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). **Immediate** consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).

63. The starting point regarding any report should always be that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Especially important, is not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as ‘banter’, ‘part of growing up’ or ‘having a laugh’.

Children sharing a classroom: Initial considerations when the report is made

Any report of sexual violence is likely to be traumatic for the victim.

However, reports of rape and assault by penetration are likely to be especially difficult with regard to the victim and close proximity with the alleged perpetrator is likely to be especially distressing. Whilst the school or college establishes the facts of the case and starts the process of liaising with children’s social care and the police, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school or college should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from the school or college, where appropriate. These actions are in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

For other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school or college premises and school or college transport, should be considered immediately.

In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated, reflecting the considerations set out at paragraph 61. The wishes of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the protection of all children in the school or college will be especially important when considering any immediate actions.

Options to manage the report

64. It is important that schools and colleges consider every report on a case-by-case basis as per paragraph 61. When to inform the alleged perpetrator will be a decision that should be carefully considered. Where a report is going to be made to children’s social

care and/or the police, then, as a general rule, the school or college should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegations. However, as per general safeguarding principles, this does not and should not stop the school or college taking immediate action to safeguard their children, where required.

65. There are four likely scenarios for schools and colleges to consider when managing any reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

1. Manage internally

- In some cases of sexual harassment, for example, one-off incidents, the school or college may take the view that the children concerned are not in need of early help or statutory intervention and that it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, perhaps through utilising their behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.
- Whatever the schools or college's response, it should be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

CASE STUDY

A 12-year-old girl reported to the head of year that five boys in her friendship group were playing a game, which involved daring each other to use increasingly graphic sexually explicit language, describing what they would like to do to her. She was very upset, but did not want to get anyone into trouble or everyone to know about it. She just wanted them to stop. She explained this to her head of year.

The head of year explained to her that what she had experienced was extremely serious and reassured her that her reaction was completely understandable. He also explained that he would pass the report to the designated safeguarding lead to ensure records were updated. He explained he would be following the school's behaviour policy and would speak to the boys involved and their parents, making it clear that what they were doing was sexual bullying and harassment and taken extremely seriously.

The girl's parents were contacted and given the opportunity to discuss the action the school planned to take.

Result: the boys were removed from the classroom and reprimanded with their parents present. It was made clear that the behaviour was unacceptable and they received a

punishment in line with the behaviour policy. They were also warned about the more severe consequences that would arise if the harassment continued.

Everything was explained to the girl and once the head of year was satisfied that she was confident that the school had taken her complaint seriously and managed it, the boys were returned to the classroom. There have been no further incidents.

2. Early help

- In line with point 1 above, the school or college may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.
- Full details of the early help process are in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
- Multi-agency early help will work best when placed alongside strong school or college policies, preventative education as set out in Part three of this advice and engagement with parents and carers.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

3. Referrals to children's social care

- Where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, schools and colleges should make a referral to local children's social care.
- At the referral to children's social care stage, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers, unless there are compelling reasons not to (if informing a parent or carer is going to put the child at additional risk). Any such decision should be made with the support of children's social care.
- If a referral is made, children's social care will then make enquiries to determine whether any of the children involved are in need of protection or other services.
- Where statutory assessments are appropriate, the school or college (especially the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy) should be working alongside, and

cooperating with, the relevant lead social worker. Collaborative working will help ensure the best possible package of coordinated support is implemented for the victim and, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support.

- Schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of a children's social care investigation before protecting the victim and other children in the school or college. It will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with children's social care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the school or college takes do not jeopardise a statutory investigation. The risk assessment as per paragraph 58 will help inform any decision. Consideration of safeguarding the victim, alleged perpetrator, any children directly involved in the reported incident and all children (and adult students) at the school or college should be **immediate**.
- In some cases, children's social care will review the evidence and decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The school or college (generally led by the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy) should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

4. Reporting to the police

- **Any Report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to children's social care (as above).**
- It is important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) are clear about the local process for referrals and follow that process.
- Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this should be passed on to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of reporting to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice, approach.
- At this stage, schools and colleges will generally inform parents or carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers

have not been informed, it will be especially important that the school or college is supporting the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of children's social care and any appropriate specialist agencies

- Where a report has been made to the police, the school or college should consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.
- All police forces in England have specialist units that investigate child abuse. The names and structures of these units are matters for local forces. It will be important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) are aware of their local arrangements.
- In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. In such circumstances, it is important that the school or college continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.
- Whatever the response, it should be under-pinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded (written or electronic).

Considering bail conditions

- From April 2017, the use of police bail has been dramatically reduced and will only be used when deemed necessary and proportionate in exceptional circumstances. Consideration will be given to less invasive options to safeguard victims and witnesses and the administration of justice. Therefore, it is less likely that a child attending school or college will be on police bail with conditions attached if there are alternative measures to mitigate any risk.
- In the absence of bail conditions, when there is a criminal investigation, early engagement and joined up working between the school or college, children's social care and the police will be critical to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children (and adult students) involved (especially potential witnesses). Where required, advice from the police should be sought in order to help the school or college manage their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The term 'Released Under Investigation' or 'RUI' will replace those previously on bail for offences in circumstances that do not warrant the application of bail to either re-attend on a particular date or to include conditions preventing activity or in some cases ensuring compliance with an administrative process.
- Where bail is deemed proportionate and necessary, the school or college should

work with children's social care and the police to manage any implications and safeguard their children, adult students and staff. An important consideration will be to ensure that the victim can continue in their normal routine, including receiving a suitable education.

Managing any delays in the criminal process

- There may be delays in any case that is being progressed through the criminal justice system. Schools and colleges **should not wait** for the outcome (or even the start) of a police investigation before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children and adult students in the school or college. The risk assessment as per paragraph 58 will help inform any decision.
- Considering any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator whilst an investigation is ongoing is discussed below in the alleged perpetrator section.
- Whilst protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator, it will be important for the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) to work closely with the police (and other agencies as required), to ensure any actions the school or college take do not jeopardise the police investigation.
- If schools or colleges have questions about the investigation, they should ask the police. The police will help and support the school or college as much as they can (within the constraints of any legal restrictions).

The end of the criminal process

- If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the school or college should update its risk assessment, ensure relevant protections are in place for all children at the school or college and, if it has not already done so, consider any suitable action in light of their behaviour policy. If the perpetrator remains in the same school or college as the victim, the school or college should be very clear as to their expectations regarding the perpetrator now they have been convicted or cautioned. This could include expectations regarding their behaviour and any restrictions the school or college thinks are reasonable and proportionate with regard to the perpetrator's timetable.
- Any conviction (even with legal anonymity reporting restrictions) is potentially going to generate interest among other pupils or students in the school or college. It will be important that the school or college ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator remain protected, especially from any bullying or harassment (including online).
- Where cases are classified as "no further action" (NFA'd) by the police or Crown Prosecution Service, or where there is a not guilty verdict, the school or college should continue to offer support to the victim and the alleged perpetrator for as

long as is necessary. A not guilty verdict or a decision not to progress with their case will likely be traumatic for the victim. The fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. Schools and colleges should discuss any decisions with the victim in this light and continue to offer support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support for what will have likely been a difficult experience.

CASE STUDY

A 15 year old girl disclosed to a pastoral lead that she had been sexually touched by a 15 year old boy, on public transport on the way to school. The school made a referral to children's social care on the same day, submitting a MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form) for both children. The MARF led to immediate police involvement. The school arranged for the boy to have an amended timetable so that he was not in any class with the girl. Specific teaching staff were briefed on the need to ensure the children were not together. The girl was given a trusted adult she could go to at any time: this staff member agreed she would meet with the girl every day and she supported her with break and lunchtime arrangements. The girl was able to suggest how she would feel safest at lunchtime.

At the end of the second day, another girl went to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and made a report about the same boy. She reported that he had sexually assaulted her in school three weeks before. The school submitted a MARF for the girl and a second MARF for the boy. The school knew the police were involved and that a MERLIN had been submitted (a crime report involving a child), but they knew the police would not have the ongoing and detailed information about the boy held by the school. The school did not want either girl further distressed by possibly seeing the boy around school; the option choices and group sizes for the three children meant it was very difficult to educate separately. The school contacted another secondary school. The school links had been established as part of the IYFAP (In Year Fair Access Process) and made immediate arrangements for the boy to move to the other school so that his education was not disrupted. The boy remained at the new school for the duration of the investigation. The DSLs from both schools worked together with police and the children and ensured appropriate child protection information was shared so the receiving school was fully aware of the allegations.

The boy received a caution and the decision was made for him to remain at his new school where he engaged with a personalised SRE plan. Parents were

involved throughout; the children were at the centre of decision-making, often suggesting how they could be supported.

Ongoing response

Safeguarding and supporting the victim

66. The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim.

- As discussed at page 5, the school or college should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe the “victim”.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the victim, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. Schools and colleges should be aware that, by the very nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment, a power imbalance is likely to have been created between the victim and alleged perpetrator.
- The needs and wishes of the victim should be paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. It is important they feel in as much control of the process as is reasonably possible. Wherever possible, the victim, if they wish, should be able to continue in their normal routine. Overall, the priority should be to make the victim’s daily experience as normal as possible, so that the school or college is a safe space for them.
- The victim should never be made to feel they are the problem for making a report or made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support should be tailored on a case-by-case basis. The support required regarding a one-off incident of sexualised name-calling is likely to be vastly different from that for a report of rape. Support can include:
 - Children and Young People’s Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChISVAs) provide emotional and practical support for victims of sexual violence. They are based within the specialist sexual violence sector and will help the victim understand what their options are and how the criminal justice process works if they have reported or are considering reporting to the police. ChISVAs will work in partnership with schools and colleges to ensure the best possible outcomes for the victim.
 - Police and social care agencies can signpost to ChISVA services (where available) or referrals can be made directly to the ChISVA service by the young person or school or college. Contact details for ChISVAs can be found at [Rape Crisis](#) and [The Survivors Trust](#).

- Child and adolescent mental health services ([CAMHS](#)).
- [Rape Crisis](#) Centre's can provide therapeutic support for children who have experienced sexual violence.
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (to potentially remove illegal images)

CASE STUDY

A 15-year-old boy and girl who go to the same school had sex at a party and, without them knowing, other people at the party filmed it. The video was then uploaded to a site and shared around their school and other schools in the area.

Following this, the girl was sexually harassed at school being called a 'slag and a slut' during lessons. Other boys in the school began propositioning her in school and trying to touch her aggressively and inappropriately. A teacher who saw the sexual harassment in his class talked to the girl about how she was feeling and suggested she spoke to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL spoke to the girl and recorded the report, discussed her options about trying to get the video deleted from people's devices and the website it was on, and how to talk to her parents about what happened. The teachers and parents did not view the video and this was communicated to the girl and boy.

Whilst in this case the boy was not harassed in the same way as the girl, the school recognised he was also a victim and spoke to him about his feelings and what could be done to support him.

The teacher arranged a workshop as part of the PSHE curriculum for all year 10s about respect, shame, consent and their collective responsibility to challenge inappropriate sexual behaviour.

The parents of the girl and boy worked with the school and the police to get the content removed via the IWF and identify who recorded and distributed the video. Both the girl and boy were supported through the investigation with counselling.

Those responsible for harassing the girl and sharing the video received sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy.

- Victims may not disclose the whole situation immediately. They may be more comfortable providing information on a piecemeal basis. It is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. When it is clear that ongoing support will be required, schools and colleges should ask the victim if they would find it helpful to have a designated trusted adult (for example, their form tutor or designated safeguarding lead) to talk to about their needs. The choice of any such adult should be the victim's. Schools and colleges should respect and support this

choice.

- A victim of sexual violence is likely to be traumatised and, in some cases, may struggle in a normal classroom environment. While schools and colleges should avoid any action that would have the effect of isolating the victim, in particular from supportive peer groups, there may be times when the victim finds it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable and may express a wish to withdraw from lessons and activities. This should be because the victim wants to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. If required, schools and colleges should provide a physical space for victims to withdraw.
- It may be necessary for schools and colleges to maintain arrangements to protect and support the victim for a long time. Schools and colleges should be prepared for this and should work with children's social care and other agencies as required.
- It is important that the school or college do everything they reasonably can to protect the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made.
- Whilst they should be given all the necessary support to remain in their school or college, if the trauma results in the victim being unable to do this, alternative provision or a move to another school or college should be considered to enable them to continue to receive suitable education. This should only be at the request of the victim (and following discussion with their parents or carers).
- It is important that if the victim does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens (and should discuss with the victim and, where appropriate, their parents or carers as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice referenced at paragraph 54 will help support this process.

Ongoing Considerations: Victim and alleged perpetrator sharing classes

Page 26 considered the immediate response to a report. Once the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) has decided what the next steps will be in terms of progressing the report, they should consider again the question of the victim and alleged perpetrator sharing classes and sharing space at school or college. This will inevitably involve complex and difficult professional decisions, including considering their duty to safeguard children and their duty to educate them. It is important each report is considered on a case-by-case basis and risk assessments are updated as appropriate. As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, the best interests of the child should come first. In all cases,

schools and colleges should follow general safeguarding principles as per [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim. The school or college should also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school or college premises and on transport to and from school or college where appropriate. This is in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. As per the advice provided on pages 29-31, close liaison with the police is essential.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college should take suitable action, if they have not already done so. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other pupils or students).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school or college should, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion.³⁰ Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school or college, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school and college premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

In all cases, schools and colleges should record and be able to justify their decision-making.

Reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment will, in some cases, not lead to a report to the police (for a variety of reasons). In some cases, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or sexual harassment allegations are reported to the police and the case is not progressed or they are reported to the police and ultimately result in a not guilty verdict. None of this means the offence did not happen or that the victim lied. The process will have affected both victim and alleged perpetrator. Appropriate support should be provided to both individuals as required and consideration given to sharing classes and potential contact as

³⁰ Maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units should follow the statutory guidance [here](#). Independent schools and colleges should consider excluding as per their own policies.

required on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, schools and colleges should record and be able to justify their decision-making.

All of the above should be considered with the needs and wishes of the victim at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required). Any arrangements should be kept under review.

Safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator

67. The following principles are based on effective safeguarding practice and should help shape any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the alleged perpetrator:

- As discussed at page 5. The school or college should think carefully about the terminology it uses to describe the “alleged perpetrator” or “perpetrator”.
- The school or college will have a difficult balancing act to consider. On one hand they need to safeguard the victim (and all other children, adult students and staff at the school or college) and on the other hand provide the alleged perpetrator with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions.
- A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school or college. Schools and colleges should work with professionals as required to understand why a child may have abused a peer. It is important to remember that, as a child, any alleged perpetrator is entitled to, deserving of, and should be provided with, a high level of support to help them understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and help protect other children by limiting the likelihood of them abusing again.
- Consider the age and the developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the allegations. Any child will likely experience stress as a result of being the subject of allegations and/or negative reactions by their peers to the allegations against them.
- Consider the proportionality of the response. Support (and sanctions) should be considered on a case-by-case basis. An alleged perpetrator may potentially have unmet needs (in some cases these may be considerable) as well as potentially posing a risk of harm to other children. Harmful sexual behaviour in young children may be (and often are³¹) a symptom of either their own abuse or exposure to

³¹ [Hackett et al 2013](#) study of children and young people with harmful sexual behaviour suggests that two-thirds had experienced some kind of abuse or trauma.

abusive practices and or materials. Advice should be taken, as appropriate, from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police.

- It is important that if the alleged perpetrator does move to another educational institution (for any reason), that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and where appropriate, potential risks to other children, adult students and staff. The designated safeguarding lead should take responsibility to ensure this happens as well as transferring the child protection file. Information sharing advice referenced at para 54 will help support this process.

Discipline and the alleged perpetrator

Schools

68. With regard to the alleged perpetrator, advice on [behaviour and discipline in schools](#) is clear that teachers can discipline pupils whose conduct falls below the standard which could be reasonably expected of them. Exclusions statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies and PRUs is [here](#). Disciplinary action can be taken whilst other investigations by the police and/or children's social care are ongoing. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not in itself prevent a school from coming to its own conclusion, on the balance of probabilities, about what happened, and imposing a penalty accordingly. This is a matter for the school and should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should take a leading role. The school should consider if, by taking any action, they would prejudice an investigation and/or any subsequent prosecution. Careful liaison with the police and/or children's social care should help the school make a determination. It will also be important to consider whether there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for the school to reach their own view about what happened while an independent investigation is considering the same facts.

Colleges

69. Whilst colleges are not under the same legal obligations as schools with regard to behaviour and discipline, the principles set out in paragraph 68 will still be relevant and should be applied to their decision-making process.

Discipline and support

70. Taking disciplinary action and still providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions. They can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. The school or college should be very clear as to what its approach is. On the one hand there is preventative or forward-looking action to safeguard the victim and/or the perpetrator, especially where there are concerns that the perpetrator themselves may have been a victim of abuse; and, on the other, there is disciplinary action to punish a perpetrator for

their past conduct. The school or college should be very clear as to which category any action they are taking falls or whether it is really both, and should ensure that the action complies with the law relating to each relevant category.

Working with parents and carers

71. The school or college will, in most instances, engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence (this **might** not be necessary or proportional in the case of sexual harassment and should be considered on a case-by-case basis). The exception to this rule is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent or carer will put a child at additional risk.

Schools and colleges should carefully consider what information they provide to the respective parents or carers about the other child involved and when they do so. In some cases, children's social care and/or the police will have a very clear view and it will be important for the school or college to work with relevant agencies to ensure a consistent approach is taken to information sharing.

72. It is good practice for the school or college to meet the victim's parents or carers with the victim present to discuss what arrangements are being put in place to safeguard the victim and understand their wishes in terms of support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

73. It is also good practice for the school or college to meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss any arrangements that are being put into place that impact the alleged perpetrator, such as, for example, moving them out of classes with the victim and what this means for their education. The reason behind any decisions should be explained. Support for the alleged perpetrator should be discussed.

74. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would generally attend any such meetings. Consideration to the attendance of other agencies should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

75. Clear behaviour policies and child protection policies, especially policies that set out the principles of how reports of sexual violence will be managed and how victims and perpetrators are likely to be supported, that parents and carers have access to, will, in some cases, help manage what are inevitably very difficult conversations.

76. Parents and carers may well struggle to cope with a report that their child has been the victim of an assault or is alleged to have assaulted another child. Details of organisations that support parents are provided in Annex A. Schools and colleges should consider signposting parents to this support.

Safeguarding other children

77. Consideration should be given to supporting children (and adult students) who

have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration. Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic and support may be required.

78. Following any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, it is likely that some children will take “sides”. The school or college should be doing all they can to ensure both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses, are not being bullied or harassed.

79. Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fall out from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between victim and alleged perpetrator and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the victim or alleged perpetrator online and/or become victims of harassment themselves. Specialist online safety support is discussed at paragraph 43.

80. School transport is a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator following any incident or alleged incident. The school or college, as part of its risk assessment, should consider any additional potential support needs to keep all of their children safe.

81. A whole school or college approach to safeguarding, a culture that makes clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always unacceptable, and a strong preventative education programme will help create an environment in which all children at the school or college are supportive and respectful of their peers when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

82. It is important that schools and colleges keep their policies, processes and curriculum under constant review to protect all their children. Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to environmental and or systemic problems that could and should be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes or relevant parts of the curriculum.

Annex A: Further information and support

	Organisation/Website/Guidance and what they do	
Specialist Organisations	Barnardo's	UK charity caring for and supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people through their range of services.
	Lucy Faithfull Foundation	UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse. They work with families affected by sexual abuse and also run the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline.
	NSPCC	Children's charity specialising in child protection with statutory powers enabling them to take action and safeguard children at risk of abuse.
	Rape Crisis	National charity and the umbrella body for their network of independent member Rape Crisis Centres.
	UK Safer Internet Centre	Provides advice and support to children, young people, parents, carers and schools about staying safe online.
Support for Victims	Anti-Bullying Alliance	Detailed information for anyone being bullied, along with advice for parents and schools. Signposts to various helplines and websites for further support.
	Rape Crisis	Provide and sign post to a range of services to support people who have experience rape, child abuse or any kind of sexual violence.
	The Survivors Trust	UK-wide national umbrella agency with resources and support dedicated to survivors of rape, sexual violence and child sex abuse.
	Victim Support	Supporting children and young people who have been affected by crime. Also provides support to parents and professionals who work with children and young people – regardless of whether a crime has been reported or how long ago it was.
	Brook	Traffic Light Tool supports professionals working with children and young people by helping them to identify and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours.

Toolkits	NSPCC	Online Self-assessment tool to ensure organisations are doing everything they can to safeguard children.	
	Safeguarding Unit, Farrer and Co. and Carlene Firmin, MBE, University of Bedfordshire	Peer-on-Peer Abuse toolkit provides practical guidance for schools on how to prevent, identify early and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse.	
Confidentiality	Gillick competency Fraser guidelines	Guidelines to help with balancing children's rights along with safeguarding responsibilities.	
	NSPCC: Things to know and consider	Information sharing and confidentiality for practitioners - things to know and issues to consider.	
Information Sharing	Information Commissioner's Office: Education	Information to help schools and colleges comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	
	Government information sharing advice	Guidance on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.	
Further information on sexting	UKCCIS: Advice for schools and colleges responding to sexting incidents	Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of 'sexting.' Supporting them in tackling the range of issues which these incidents present.	
	London Grid for Learning- collection of advice	Various information and resources dealing with sexting.	
Support for parents	Parentzone	Provides expert information and resources to help make the internet work for families.	
	Childnet: Advice for parents and carers to keep children safe online	Advice and resources to help parents and carers keep children safe online.	
	Parentsafe- London Grid for Learning	Detailed advice/resources covering various issues such as online safety, apps, and how to report concerns.	
	CEOP Thinkuknow advice for parents:		Advice/resources on how to approach and deal with concerns about what children may be doing online.
		Challenging harmful sexual attitudes and their impact	On the Thinkuknow site, this resource helps challenge harmful sexual attitudes.
		Supporting positive sexual behaviour	On the Thinkuknow site, advice on how to start a conversation to support positive sexual behaviour.



Department
for Education

© Crown copyright 2018

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: DFE-00155-2018



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Tuesday 2 June 2020
Title of report:	Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan 2019/2020
Report by:	Assistant director for Safeguarding and Family Support

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To review progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan 2019 / 2020 (appendix a) 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.

To provide an update on work with West Mercia Police regarding referrals to the Multi-agency safeguarding hub.

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

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 16 March 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 13 remaining actions from the Ofsted improvement plan have been incorporated into the individual services' plans. This is to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward and that this is embedded to take account of the cross cutting actions that all services are required to deliver against; for example, the timeliness of visits and completion of both case and personal supervision.
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 b) 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 c).
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 1,287 EHAs 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 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”.
11. Previously MASH were using data measuring contacts completed in a one day timescale. MASH are now reporting on contacts completed within 24 hours. Performance data for MASH indicates that an average of 44% of all contacts were completed within 24 hours. This is well below the target of 95%. 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.
12. Child Exploitation/Contextual Safeguarding has been subject to a scrutiny committee task and finish group with three meetings taking place between 8th November 2019 – 6th December 2019; in addition a spotlight review was carried out in respect of peer on peer abuse on the 16th December 2019. The final report of the task and finish group is on the agenda of the current meeting; the spotlight review reported back to the executive in January 2020; the response of the executive is also on the agenda of the current meeting.
13. The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 4 there were 352 children in care which equates to 98 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.
14. An Alternatives to Care panel which is chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding was introduced in September 2018. This panel decides whether care proceedings should be initiated, whether children should be admitted to care under Section 20, and reviews decisions to admit children to care in an unplanned way.

15. The local authority has had a lower rate of children leaving care than statistical neighbours and our focus is upon identifying children who could safely return to their parents care or who could be cared for under a Special Guardianship Order. Progress was slow with continued drift and delay in the progression of assessments and applications to Court which is further impacted by a risk averse culture. This is now being robustly challenged and care orders were discharged for 8 children during quarter 4 with applications for a further 17 children with legal services or already issued.
16. A Quality assurance framework commenced in July 2019, and has established a timetable of audits of social work cases, undertaken through a formalised audit programme which includes combined audit activity such as deep dive audits, thematic audits and moderated audits. Monthly audit feedback reports are produced following the collation of the details captured in the audits. These are reported into the Assistant Director/ Head of Service meetings on a monthly basis, and workshops to provide learning from audit activity, plus bi monthly learning sessions are now taking place to close the learning loop following audit activity and findings.
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 has 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 quarter one of 2020/2021.
18. At the end of quarter 4 a number of performance indicators for safeguarding and family support had shown some improvement. In particular, there has been an overall improvement in the percentage of visits being undertaken in quarter 4 with both looked after children (98% and child protection visits (96%) exceeding the target of 95%; child in need visits are at 82% at the end of quarter 4 but have improved from quarter 3 when they were at 69%.
19. Supervision within the quarter has also seen an improved outturn in quarter 4 with 84% of supervisions being completed in March 2020; compared to 62% in December 2019. Performance information is subject to weekly and monthly review by managers. Performance challenge sessions, are to be held on a regular basis with the Heads of Service and their team managers and are due to commence in May 2020.
20. There were 2,017 contacts received in quarter 4; which is an increase against the number of contacts received in quarter 3 which was 1,790. The conversion rate of contacts to referrals has also seen a slight decrease from 21% in quarter 3 to 16.39% in quarter 3. Contacts completed within a 1 day timescale (year to date) at the end of quarter 3 was 88% and at the end of quarter 4 was 88% remaining at a similar level. However, we are moving to contacts being dealt with in a 24 hour period; 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 from 73% in quarter 3 to 87% in quarter 4; with the year to date outturn being 80% compared to 65% in 2018/19; 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.

22. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub continues to receive the highest number of contacts from West Mercia Police. Work has been undertaken by the Safeguarding Partnership, Assistant director safeguarding and family support and the Director for children and families to address this. In addition, the chair of Children and young people's scrutiny committee has also written to West Mercia Police and there continues to be no reduction in the number of contacts received into the MASH.
23. To provide an update on the work with West Mercia Police in summary, over quarter four there were 1,098 contacts received from West Mercia Police; this was 54.43% of all contacts received for this period and only 5.90% of these progressed to a referral requiring social work intervention; this can be broken down as follows:
 - In January 2020, 356 contacts were received; this was 53.45% of all contacts received; only 8.99% of these contacts progressed to a referral requiring social work intervention.
 - In February 2020, 324 contacts were received; this was 51.92% of all contacts received only 7.72% of these contacts progressed to a referral requiring social work intervention.
 - In March 2020, 418 contacts were received; this was 57.50% of all contacts received; only 6.94% of these contacts progressed to a referral requiring social work intervention.

Community impact

24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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

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 -

- 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.

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. We continue to make sure that as our improvement plan is implemented that we pay due regard to equality legislation.

29. 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

30. 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.

31. 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

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

Risk management

33. 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.

34. The risks to successful delivery of the plan are:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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

35. 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.

36. 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 2019/2020

Appendix B - Herefordshire Children’s Safeguarding Social Work Self - Assessment to end of quarter 4 2019/2020

Appendix C – Safeguarding and Family Support monthly scorecard March 2020

Background papers

None identified

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
Statutory Visits to children will be completed within timescales 79	Heads of Service Team Managers	Children are seen to be safe and well, their voices heard, and they can develop a trusting relationship with their social worker	Looked after child (LAC) visits will be completed to timescale. Target 95% LAC visits average Sept 2018 – March 2019 : 79%	98%	Green	↑
			Child in need (CIN) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95% CIN visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 53%	82%	Red	↑
			Child protection (CP) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95% CP visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 77%	96%	Green	↑
Strategy discussions will take place within timescales	Heads of service Team managers	Risks to children and young people are assessed, and	Strategy discussions are held within timescale - target of 90%	97%	Green	↔

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
		intervention agreed is effective in keeping them safe	Outturn 2018/19 : 97%			
Section 47 (S47) investigations will take place within timescales	Heads of Service Team Managers	Levels of risk will be identified in a timely manner, and children will receive the most appropriate intervention to safeguard them, according to their needs, swiftly.	S47 investigations will take place within timescales. Target 95% Outturn 2018/19 : 34%	67%		↑
Children and family assessments will be completed within 45 days	Team Managers	Children will be seen, their voices heard, and their level of need identified in a timely manner	Assessments will be completed within timescale. Target 95% Outturn 2018/19 : 65%	80%		↔
Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) and Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC's) will take place within timescales	Team Managers IRO Service Business Support	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.	ICPC's and RCPC's will take place within timescales Target 90%	ICPC: 75%		↓
			Outturn 2018/19 : ICPC 65% RCPC 100%	RCPC: 100%		↔
LAC Reviews will take place within timescales	Team Managers IRO Service	Children will not be subject to drift and delay	LAC reviews will take place within target timescales 90%	Total LAC reviews % in timescale 88%.		↔

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
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.	MASH TM and Head of Service	Risk will be identified and no child will be left at risk of significant harm.	Target of 95% of contacts dealt within 24 hours of receipt into MASH will be met.	1 day 88% 24hr: 44% We will be moving to reporting contacts that are dealt with in a 24 hour period		↔
We will ensure children receive early help swiftly where this is the appropriate service, by establishing an early help hub in MASH.	Head of Service Early help. Assistant Director Education	Issues will be addressed at the earliest opportunity with the lowest level of intervention where appropriate and safe to do so, to prevent escalation of issues for children. Children will wait no more than 4 weeks to receive a service.	Increase in children receiving early help intervention. Outturn 2018/19 : 1088	Early Help: Jun 19: 1188 Sep 19: 1230 Dec 19: 1159 Mar 2020: 1295 Historically there was a long waiting list for early help specialist family support services with some children waiting for more than 4 weeks for a service. At the end of Q4 there		↑

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)




This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
82				were 19 families' with a maximum waiting time of 4 weeks on the waiting list.		
			Reduction in % contacts converting to referral. Outturn 2018/2019: 17.4%	Contacts to Referral (year to date %): Q2 2019: 24% Q3 2019: 23% Q4 2019/20: 21%		↓

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)


This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
8			Decrease in re-referrals Outturn 2018/19 : 31%	There has been a decrease in re-referrals. End Q1: 23% End Q2: 19% End Q3: 19% End Q4: 20%		
We will “shift” CIN work to the assessment service and to achieve this will establish a third team in the assessment service, one Team Manager, a Senior practitioner and four social workers	Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Family Support	Children will receive services, appropriate to their level of need without delay, and without a change in social worker. We will intervene swiftly at CIN level preventing unnecessary escalation to CP	CP numbers will decrease and stabilise. CIN interventions will evidence sustainable change.	CIN work moved to the Assessment Service. New Assessment team has been set up and the numbers of CP are decreasing.		
We will “shift” the family support service to work alongside the assessment service, to support families at the child in need level with	Assistant Director Safeguarding and family support	Children and families will receive family support at the earliest opportunity, to address issues, and work with families	CP numbers will decrease and stabilise. CIN interventions will evidence sustainable change.	Family support service has moved into the assessment teams and CP numbers have decreased.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
strong intensive family support		to bring about sustainable change	There will be a decrease in repeat CP plans. There will be a decrease in re-referrals			
We will enable CP Court workers to focus on CP cases, cases in pre proceedings and proceedings.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support. CP/Court Head of Service	Children who require intervention as they are at significant risk of harm will receive intervention that promotes their safety and wellbeing.	Decrease in repeat CP interventions with children Maintain CP numbers @ 140-150 (appropriate number for Hereford demographic compared to statistical neighbours)	CP numbers @ month end: Sep 18: 124 Mar 19: 111 Jun 19: 105 Sep 19: 153 Dec 19: 173 Mar 20: 108 We need to note that whilst we have decreased the number of CP we are below the demographic compared to our statistical neighbours.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
85				Second CPP (within 2 years) Mar 19: 18% Jun 19 : 17% Sep 19: 16% Dec 19: 14% Mar 20: 21%		
We will progress cases through pre proceedings and ensure actions identified are carried out to timescale. We will appoint an additional case progression officer to track cases and ensure they are working to timescales	Heads of Service CP/Court and safeguarding and review.	Children will not experience drift and delay. Parents will be clear what needs to change and timescales for children for changes to be made.	Evidence timescales in pre proceedings are consistently met. Decision regarding children's futures at the conclusion of pre proceedings are taken at panel without delay.	Suggested changes to alternatives to care panel and pre proceedings being consulted upon and being implemented in February 2020. Delay in recruitment of case progression officer and delay in making changes to the alternative to care panel; but these		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
				have now been implemented in q1.		
We will consider permanence planning at the earliest opportunity upon agreement to issue care proceedings.	Head of Service CP/Court. Case progression officer.	Children will not experience drift and delay. The most appropriate permanency option for each individual child will be considered at the earliest opportunity.	More children have appropriate permanence plans identified earlier in proceedings.	Initial permanency planning meetings established. Review permanency meetings also established to ensure permanence options considered and timescales met to inform planning. Full impact of this has yet to be evidenced. Review to be undertaken end March 2020.		↔
We will front load work to ensure when we do enter proceedings these can be concluded in a timely manner.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support. Heads of Service Team Managers	Children will not be subject to extended care proceedings	Maintain high performance in care proceedings concluding in 26 weeks.	Local Family Justice Board data indicates high performance against 26 week timescale		↔

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
We will ensure cases are transferred without delay to the appropriate part of the service	Heads of Service Team Managers	Children will receive the right service from the right social work service at the right time	Weekly transfer meetings will be held. There will be no unallocated cases. Cases will not remain on CIN or CPO plans for extended periods of time.	Transfer meetings held on a weekly basis chaired by HoS. No unallocated cases.		↔
We will develop our intervention with children and young people at risk of exploitation and develop a multi-agency approach to address child exploitation and rebrand this as contextualised safeguarding.	AD Safeguarding and family support. HoS safeguarding and review	Children and young people at risk of Child exploitation are diverted or where necessary supported to reduce the risk of harm ensure the child has	Young people and children who are at risk of exploitation will have regular risk management meetings and safety plans. Police operations can take place if required on information gathered. Multi agency prevent and disrupt activity will be effective.	Risk management meetings are being completed. Reporting on activity in this area of the service to scrutiny committee, November/December 2019. Still awaiting final report from scrutiny.		↑
Risk assessments are completed within timescales where risk of exploitation has been identified	AD Safeguarding and Family Support. HoS safeguarding and review	Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited	90% of exploitation risk assessments completed within 5 working days	This reporting on this is being discussed further as to ensure that it accurately reflects the measure being		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
				asked for and will be developed in Q1 2020/21		
Risk management meetings are held within prescribed timescales	AD safeguarding and family support. HoS safeguarding and review	Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.	95% of risk management meetings held at least every 4 weeks for young people who are known to be exploited or at significant risk of exploitation	Dec 19: 79.63% Mar 20: 13%	Red	↓
			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%		↓
Safety plans are developed in a timely manner during and following risk management meetings	AD safeguarding family support. HoS safeguarding and review.	Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.	90% of safety plans provided and distributed within 5 working days of a risk management meeting	Safety plans are uploaded into mosaic as a word document and discussion is underway with the HOS Safeguarding and Review as to how this can be reported from Mosaic		
Children who are reported missing and are found receive	AD safeguarding and family support. HoS	Young people will receive an effective response and support	100% of young people not previously receiving a service have a return home interviews	Workflow has been amended within Q4 as per instruction from HOS		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will provide a service where children are protected, and do not experience drift or delay in the progression of their plans						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	End of quarter progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
an effective response and their views are heard	safeguarding and review.	to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.	within 1 working day of being found	Safeguarding and Review and new reporting will commence in Q1 of 2020/2021		
			100% of children placed from another local authority or already receiving a service have return home interviews within 3 working days	Workflow has been amended within Q4 as per instruction from HOS Safeguarding and Review and new reporting will commence in q1 of 2020/2021		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
06 Every staff member will receive regular supervision	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support Heads of Service Team managers	Children will receive a high quality service and are safeguarded through plans and support which are effective	90% supervisions undertaken every calendar month Outturn 2018/ 19 : 71% overall	March supervisions: 84% overall 80% operational 100% business support		
Recruitment of social workers, will mean caseloads will be at a manageable level to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support. Organisational Development Business partner.	Children and families will receive an improved service as social workers will have time and capacity to build relationships, reflect on issues and appropriate responses, with children and families.	Fortnightly caseload performance information will evidence all caseloads under 20.	% workers holding more than 20 cases. 16+ team: 0% Assessment Team 1: 17% Assessment Team 2: 0% Assessment Team 3: 0% Court Team 1: 20% Court Team 2: 14% Court Team 3: 0% CWD: 50% LAC Team 1: 17% LAC Team 2: 0%		All teams have seen  improvement

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
Learning from audit activity will be shared with teams in learning workshops to aid development in social work practice across the service.	Principal Social Worker. QA Manager Heads of Service	Learning will inform and develop social work practice, improving services and interventions offered to children and families.	All workshops will take place in the timescales set and attendance by children and families' social workers will be at least 70%.	7 of 9 planned workshops have gone ahead. 1 cancelled due to absence of Principal Social Worker. 1 not yet achieved due to COVID 19 – update awaited from team manager. Attendance ranges between 33% for bi monthly event to 100% for reflective case discussion between Heads of Service following deep dive audits		
Bi-monthly learning events will take place to aid learning and development across the workforce, and embed a learning culture which informs development of good practice.	Principal Social Worker	Children will benefit from having a stable workforce that is highly skilled	QA Manager report will evidence bi monthly learning events have taken place. 70% of staff will have attended.	Bi monthly events are taking place as required. Event regarding Professional development and strengthening practice held on 03/02/2020. Attendance of 30 staff across a variety of		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
				Social Work teams. This equates to around 33% of Social Work staff.		
Group Supervision will be held on a monthly basis, led by senior practitioners, to aid and enhance learning and development	Heads of Service	Children and families will benefit from improved service delivery through social worker reflection on practice.	HoS will report in their improvement plans that group supervisions have taken pace as required.	Group supervision has commenced across all services.		
Feedback and learning from audit activity will evidence improvement in the quality of social work practice on a quarterly basis.	Principal Social Worker	Practice will improve for children and families in Herefordshire.	Audit activity will show an increase in the % of work graded good: End September target; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% good. • 0% inadequate End December target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% good • 0% inadequate End March target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% good. • 0% inadequate. 	End March 2020 55% Good 39% RI 6% Inadequate		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)


This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim																
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers																
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter										
<p>We have put in place a range of measures to enhance salaries and benefits for social workers</p> <p>Commissioned an external recruitment agency to recruit to hard to fill posts</p> <p>Worked with the regional ADCS Future Social Scheme to bring in agency workers.</p> <p>Increased business support and family support to assist social workers and take tasks from them</p>	<p>Organisational Development Business Partner, Assistant director safeguarding and family support, Director Children and Families</p>	<p>Children benefit from having well qualified, committed social workers</p>	<p>Vacancies will be filled and over time Herefordshire will recruit permanent social workers who stay</p>	<p>As at March 2020</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Permanent</td> <td>117</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agency</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Permanent Vacancies</td> <td>31.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Empty Seats</td> <td>12.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fixed Term</td> <td>2.8</td> </tr> </table>	Permanent	117	Agency	19	Permanent Vacancies	31.2	Empty Seats	12.2	Fixed Term	2.8		
Permanent	117															
Agency	19															
Permanent Vacancies	31.2															
Empty Seats	12.2															
Fixed Term	2.8															
<p>We will recruit newly qualified social workers to complete an Assessed and Supported year in employment (ASYE) social workers.</p>	<p>Principal Social Worker</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>ASYE's :- 2019/2020</p> <p>Q1 = 3</p> <p>Q2 = 3</p> <p>Q3 = 3</p> <p>Q4 = 4</p>												

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)


This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
94			7 NQSWs who started their ASYE in 2018 and finished in 2019 6 NQSWs started in September 2017 and finished in September 2018 3 NQSWs who started in June 2017 and finished in 2018			
We will establish a clear social work career pathway to enable social workers to invest in a career in Herefordshire	Organisational Development Business Partner	Children will benefit from having well qualified, committed and experienced social workers.	We will retain workers in Herefordshire, and appoint to senior positions from within.	This has not progressed in this quarter		
Signs of safety will be implemented across the council so there is a consistent approach across all partners in working with children and families.	Principal Social Worker	A strengths based approach will be embedded across all agencies, relationship based social work practice will flourish, feedback will be	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		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
56		positive, from families, partners and Ofsted.		Signs of Safety Assessment and next steps planning took place along with initial workshops for 4 of the 5 identified work streams		
We will establish an apprenticeship scheme to train non-qualified workers to social worker level and will back fill posts for apprentices to enable them to maximise their study activities	Organisational Development Business Partner	Children will receive a service from a suitably qualified social worker. Children will be able to build relationships with their social worker, and will not experience unnecessary changes in the social worker allocated to work with them.	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		
We will increase our children's social work leadership and capacity to enable the council to have the capacity to improve.	Director children and families	Children will receive a high quality and timely service	We will be able to demonstrate appropriate workloads for staff and clear evidence of improvements in quality of practice being embedded in day to day work –	Business case developed for a range of leadership and quality posts as well as additional social workers are in the assessment team and a senior practitioner, tracking		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.




Aim						
We will recruit , train and develop a highly skilled and confident workforce who are enabled to develop and progress in their social work careers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
			evidenced by performance and quality measures improving and reported in this plan.	and put forward for 2020/21 budget.		

96

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
We will use performance information to interrogate practice and performance, to inform progress against improvement plan targets	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support Heads of Service Team managers Performance team	All managers across Childrens and families will know area for development, and can take swift action to rectify areas where minimum standards required are not being met.	Performance information will be green across the board and all KPIs will be consistently met.	Performance reports are available weekly, consistently collated and distributed, and used to inform evaluation of progress against service area improvement plans.		
Each HoS will oversee a service area improvement plan which will track improvement against KPIs. This will be updated on a monthly basis and be reported into AD/HoS Budget & Performance monthly meeting	Heads of Service	As performance improves, children and families will receive services of a consistently high quality.	The RAG rating in each plan will move from majority red to majority green.	Plans are updated every quarter, so the process of reviewing performance and reporting on performance against plans is embedded.		
Each HoS will provide a SEF to report on overall service area activity on a quarterly basis	Heads of Service	Each service area will have an up to date and accurate assessment of its strengths, areas for improvement, and	SEF will increasingly identify areas of good practice and strengths within service areas.	SEFs have been completed for end of quarter 4.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
86		timescales to achieve improvement, so are continually driving forward to improve the quality of services.				
Each HoS will hold monthly service area performance meetings with team managers and senior practitioners so all managers are conversant with performance in their individual teams, service areas and across the organisation	Heads of Service	In identifying areas where performance needs attention, children and families in Herefordshire will be served by an organisation seeking to continually improve its service to children and families in Herefordshire.	Trends will show improvement. Areas identified as requiring improvement will receive appropriate attention and show improvement.	Performance information is now available on a weekly basis. Embedding the use of this to drive performance improvement requires embedding across all service areas.		
A Mosaic improvement group will meet on a monthly basis to develop and improve the efficiency and breadth of reporting across children & families	Business Support leads. Performance team.	Processes to identify case progression for each child will be improved, so cases that may be subject to drift and delay are quickly identified.	Performance against timescale targets will improve.	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		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
Monthly audit activity will take place, the outcome of which will be reported into AD/HOS monthly business and practice meeting by PSW and QA manager	Principal social worker	As an organisation, we will identify good practice that can be rolled out across all services, so children and families in Hereford will benefit from improvement in social work practise and intervention.	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.	Audit activity is taking place as planned (thematic/moderated/deep dive). Monthly reports are discussed at AD/HOS business and practice meeting. % work good has increased between last quarter and this quarter, and % graded inadequate has decreased over the same time period.		↔
Quarterly deep dive audit will take place focussing on a specific practice area but in all deep dive audits timeliness quality and consistency of management grip will be measured	Principal social worker	Over time, a clear, detailed picture will be established as to the quality of practice, areas for improvement established and training required to support practice improvement will be developed, improving services	Training programme will be informed by outcomes of deep dive audit and practice in specific service areas will improve.	Bi monthly learning events are being held in response to deep dive audit outcomes. The next bi monthly event will relate to neglect and is taking place in June 2020. Re-audit of Peer on peer audit shows an increase in overall percentage from 43% in		↔

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)


This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
100		to children and families across Herefordshire.		<p>September 2019 to 66% in March 2020; this is an increase in the overall quality of work.</p> <p>Re-audit of parental participation within the IRO team shows an increase in overall percentage from 38% in August 2019 to 54% in February 2020; this is an increase in the overall quality of work.</p> <p>Re-audit of parental participation within the LAC team shows an increase in overall percentage from 50% in August 2019 to 60% in February 2020 an overall increase in the quality of work across the audit.</p>		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will embed a system of performance management that provides strong management grip, oversight, and decision making, informed by a robust QA system.						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
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.	QA manager	Cases where actions are identified to benefit children and families will be completed in a timely manner, improving the safety and wellbeing of children receiving social care intervention.	QA manager will report into AD/HoS meeting that there are no actions outstanding from timescale agreed.	This process has been reviewed following Ofsted focused visit in December 2019 to ensure all actions are completed in a timely manner. QA manager shares all outstanding audit actions with Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support on a weekly basis, who in turn shares with heads of service. Timeliness of completion has improved.		
We will recruit an additional Quality Assurance (QA) manager to provide greater opportunity for quality assurance, feedback and learning	Director Children's Services	Children and families will benefit from improvement in intervention and quality of social work practice identified in QA activity.	Additional QA manager will be in post.	Included in budget setting 2020/21.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
Looked after children (LAC) reviews are held and records distributed within statutory timescales	HoS Safeguarding and Review	Children will not experience drift and delay. Plans will be progressed due to reviews taking place within timescales.	95% of 1st LAC reviews held within timescale Outturn 2018/19 90%	84%		↑
			95% of 2nd and subsequent LAC reviews held within timescale Outturn 2018/19 84%	93%		↑
			90% of LAC review minutes written and distributed within 20 working days Outturn 2018/19 48%	48%		↑
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) recommendations from LAC	HoS safeguarding and review	Children's plans will be progressed so they will not experience drift and delay and	90% of LAC review recommendations are completed and sent to relevant	77%		↑

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
103 reviews are agreed and progressed within timescales		the best options for their future will be progressed swiftly.	team manager within 5 working days of the review Outturn 2018/19 73%			
			90% of LAC review recommendations are responded to by the relevant team manager within 5 working days of having received them Outturn 2018/19 65%	72%		↑
IRO is effective in ensuring care plans are appropriate to meet needs and do not drift	HoS Safeguarding and review	Children's plans do not drift and their progress is overseen by their IRO.	90% of cases have at least 2 IRO oversights recorded within a 12 month period Outturn 2018/19 83%	79.13%		↓
	HoS safeguarding and review	Where issues are identified that are preventing plans for children progressing, these are acted	100% of formal disputes resolved within 20 working days	7 dispute resolutions were raised, 7 were dealt within timescale.		↑

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)



This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
104		upon swiftly by using the escalation process, evidencing IRO grip on the progression of children's care plans.				
Children will be encouraged to participate in their LAC reviews in a meaningful way	HoS safeguarding and review	Children will be able to voice their views and inform their care plans.	90% of children over the age of 4 participate in their LAC review in some form Outturn 2018/19 84%	94%		↑
Children will have the opportunity to consult with their IRO before their LAC review and will be provided with information about their rights and entitlements	Safeguarding and Review Head of Service	The wishes and feelings of children will be heard, validated, and will be part of establishing plans for children.	85% of children have a consultation with their IRO as part of each LAC review Outturn 2018/19 97%	92.17%		↑
Life story work and later life letters will be completed for every child moving to adoption in a timely manner.	LAC head of Service	Children will be able to understand their own family and care history	The backlog of life story work and later life letters will reduce every month and be eliminated	29 children who have been adopted are awaiting the completion		↑

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)


This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
105			Outturn August 2019 was 42 outstanding	of a life story book or later life letter.		
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).	LAC head of Service	Children who can be safely cared for outside of the LAC system can grow up within a family without state intervention.	Number of looked after children leaving care will increase to that equivalent to or above statistical neighbours. Numbers of looked after children will decrease.	Orders have been successfully discharged for 8 children during quarter 4 with applications for a further 17 children with legal or filed with the Court. Progress continues to be scrutinised on a monthly basis by the AD for safeguarding and family support.		
We are investing in property for our care leavers and support services in the accommodation. We are submitting a further	LAC head of Service	Care leavers who require a level of support will be able to obtain this in Hereford, maintaining their links with friends, kin and	Funding for placements will decrease. Young people will remain in Hereford.	Completion of building work delayed due to Covid-19. Project		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)







This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will achieve positive futures for looked after children; avoid drift, achieve permanency at the earliest opportunity, and ensure looked after children and care leavers receive effective support into adulthood						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel compared to previous quarter
business case for an expansion of local supported accommodation in Herefordshire		community in surroundings they are familiar with.		expected to commence end of June 2020		
We will establish clear transition pathways for vulnerable young people so they receive the services they require to assist them in adulthood.	Assistant Director safeguarding and family support	Young adults, vulnerable to risk will receive services to assist them transition into adulthood.	There will be an increase in young people who receive services when entering into adulthood.	This is still to be progressed.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

Aim						
We will aim to strengthen families and enable children to live within their family network through early help and edge of care offers						
Actions to achieve aim	Delivery lead	Impact on children	How will we know	Quarterly progress	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will invest resources into both early help and family support resources to ensure children receive services at the earliest possible opportunity. 107	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	We will establish a culture of maintaining children within their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.	Re referrals will decrease. Early help interventions will increase. LAC numbers will decrease. CP numbers will decrease Outturn 2018/19 Re-referrals 31% Early Help 1088 LAC 334 CP 111	There has been a decrease in re-referrals. End Q1: 23% End Q2: 19% End Q3: 19% End Q4: 20% Early help interventions remain high @ 1295 LAC numbers have decreased to 352. CP numbers have decreased to 108.		   
We will reconfigure where the social care family support system operates to ensure it can work with families at the earliest opportunity.	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	Children and families will receive services aimed to enable them to become more resilient and maintain sustainable change at an earlier opportunity, reducing the need for statutory social care intervention	We will have fewer children on CP plans, caseloads in CP/Court will reduce, and fewer children will be re-referred to children's social care.	Family support service has moved into the assessment teams and is evidenced by fewer children being on CP plans		
We will developed an edge of care service, to enable children to reunify to and/or remain with their families	Assistant director safeguarding and family support.	Children will be enabled to remain within their family network, or return to their family network where safe to do so,	We will have a fully functioning edge of care service. Less children will enter the looked after system, more children will leave the looked after system,	A full team of in-house ECHO workers has been appointed who have begun to transition to their new roles.		

Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2019-2020

(updated to end of quarter 4, March 2020)

This plan is underpinned by individual service area action plans to address improvement. Performance is reviewed through weekly reports, monthly scorecard and through the audit programme. These are reported up through Assistant Director/Head of Service bi monthly meetings, Directorate Senior Management Meetings, to the Chief Exec and Lead member on a monthly basis, to group leaders through performance challenge sessions and to Children and Families Scrutiny and to cabinet.

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

Direction of travel key:-



Increase in improvement of direction of travel



Remained same as previous period



Decrease in improvement of direction of travel

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. However the international coronavirus pandemic is now fundamentally affecting the way we work, including the ability to meet colleagues from Essex. We will be working with the DfE and Essex to take forward improvement work virtually where this is possible.

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 1287 EHAs 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 2018/19: The Key Worker for EHAs - Primary Schools 23.4%, Health Visitors 21.4%, Secondary Schools 16.4% and Local Authority staff 14.1%.

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 but due to Covid 19 they have been suspended and early help coordinators are following up cases by telephone and giving advice and guidance as required. 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 programmes are delivered throughout the county where the needs are and at times to suit parents.

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 rounds:

The three specialist services have suspended visits to the vast majority of families but are all continuing to work with families by phone or using 'WhatsApp' video facility. Visiting families is only completed if a family is at risk of escalating to social care, the family agree to the visit and the Public Health latest guidelines are followed.

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 MASH continues to develop and there is a plan to move towards all level 1, 2 and 3 cases to automatically be sent to early help. An Early Help coordinator still sits in MASH to complete MASH checks. Early help continues to follow up cases from MASH which includes: identifying with the family the most appropriate agency to complete an Early Help assessment and so starting the process of getting a package of support in place for the family, to signposting to a single agency for support without requiring an Early Help assessment e.g. Grandparents who were looking after their grandchild were concerned they could no longer do this as they couldn't afford to - they were put in contact with Pension Credits.

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 is mainly working remotely with families by phone and WhatsApp video conferencing.

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 years 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 February 2020 there were 1287 early help cases. The current conversion rate is 76.8% of families who meet at least two Troubled Families criteria and making 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 1287 in February 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 trialing 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. October 2020.
2. To develop a strength based approach within Early Help – Signs of Safety to be rolled out over the next three years.
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.
4. To improve the knowledge of Herefordshire's community assets available to families and share this knowledge on WISH (Wellbeing, Information & Signposting for Herefordshire) and with partner agencies. Phase 1 completed. Regular checking of information and sharing at Family Network Meetings.

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.



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”.

Previously MASH were using data measuring contacts completed in a one day timescale. This was not compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. MASH are now reporting on contacts completed within 24 hours. Performance data for MASH indicates that an average of 44% of all contacts were completed within 24 hours. This is well below the target of 95%. 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 rag rate determined by timing. Additional Social Worker capacity has been provided. Development of the Early Help Hub will improve the timeliness of contacts being completed.

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.

Strategy discussions take place within the MASH at the point of referral if required and immediate actions are taken to safeguard children.

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. The amount of contacts received have remained the same, there has been a slight increase of re-referrals received, and an increase of cases being referred to the Early Help Team. However, once Early Help have been referred to there is a delay for some family support going into place. Q4 has seen consistency in contacts converting to referrals. Data evidences that between 20% and 13% of contacts progress to referrals and the need for intervention. This is in line with our statistical neighbors. Monthly multi agency performance meetings are held to consider cases and ensure a consistent and appropriate threshold is applied.

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. We are strengthening 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. Work has been done between the Head of Services of MASH and Early Help to present options to the Senior Management Team with an aim to ensure children and families receive the most appropriate and timely support they need to prevent Social Care involvement. The implementation of the Early Help Hub is planned for September 2020. This will ensure a timely response from the most appropriate service to ensure children are safe and supported.

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. Domestic Abuse meetings take place on a daily basis with partner agencies on DASH assessed standard and medium risk to ensure appropriate information sharing and support is provided. DASH high risk are investigated by MASH. Further development is being undertaken to enhance the Domestic Abuse Hub with all partner agencies. Contact has been made with Safelives 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 62% 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 90.66% completed within timescales. This is a significant improvement from Q3 but still falls below target.

Whilst the Assessment Service has seen a significant decrease in caseloads. This is due to the recruitment of staff and consistent thresholds being applied in MASH. ASYE's hold no more than 10 cases. Experience Social Workers hold no more than 20 cases.

Child in Need cases remain in the Assessment Teams. There are 9 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.

To address the timeliness of 3 day visits, Children and Family Assessments and caseloads, the Head of Service and Managers have weekly performance meetings and daily briefings to ensure targets are met.

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 Head of Service observes 2 supervision each quarter to consider the quality of the supervision being provided.

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.

Areas of strength, evidence

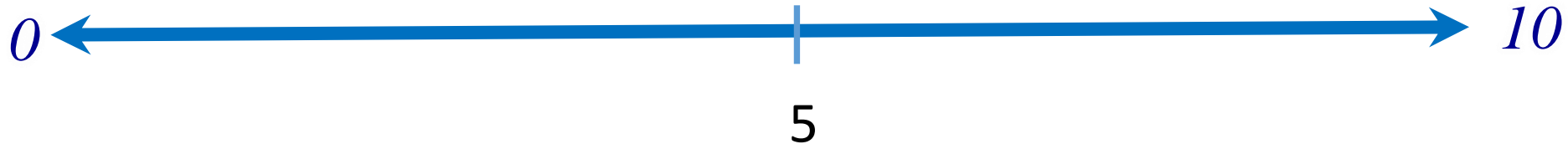
1. The MASH works to a well-established multi-agency model.
2. There are experienced social workers collating information from partner agencies to provide clear recommendations and defensible decisions.
3. Good responses to immediate harm to children between Police, social services and our multi-agency 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

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. 1st June 20.
4. Work between MASH and Early Help needs to develop to provide a consistent and fast response to ensure safety and provide appropriate support for children and families.-1st June 2020
5. 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

	<p>timeliness of contacts. Findings are presented to the MASH Partnership Forum.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 100% case supervisions recorded within 3 months by end of Q1. HoS will observe 2 supervisions by 30th June 20. 7. Senior Practitioners will provide reflective supervision individually and within a group. This will improve practice to be completed by end of Q1. 8. Thematic audits will be completed. Child Exploitation May 2020, Pre-birth Assessments April 2020. 9. 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-Consistency will be seen by the end of Q1 10. Development of Child in Need (CIN) 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 wishes and feelings will be heard and support provided to reduce the need for children to move to alternate accommodation-Family Support Workers will be recruited and trained by the end of Q1 2020/2021 11. 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. 12. 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 Q1 2020/2021.
--	---

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)

There are two distinct teams and two further roles within the Safeguarding and Review Service. The two individual roles are that of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who is responsible for responding to allegations against professionals / those in a position of trust who work with or come into contact with children, and the Case Progression Officer, with responsibilities for support and oversight of children’s cases progressing to a permanent outcome through the court process or pre-proceedings interventions.

The two distinct teams are the Safeguarding and Review Managers (IROs and Conference Chairs) and the Child Exploitation Team, who provide support and advice to social workers and partner agencies in relation to matters of child exploitation and undertake 1:1 direct work with families and children in this vulnerable group. This service is subject of a separate SEF.

At the end of Quarter 4 there are 7.6 Safeguarding and Review Managers (with mixed Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and CP Conference Chair caseloads) allocated to and with direct case review responsibility for 464 children; undertaking IRO duties for 352 Looked After Children and Conference Chair duties for 112 Child Protection cases. This represents a caseload average of 61. This is a reduction from the caseload average of 67 at the end of the last quarter. A significant change is the ending of one full time fixed term post due to the responsibility for chairing CIN reviews returning to Social Workers. The Safeguarding and Review Managers are line managed by the Principal IRO, who took up their six month fixed term contract post in mid-February, who is in turn line managed by the Interim Head of Service Safeguarding and Review. The team has moved from nearly 50% agency staff twelve months ago to, when the final newly appointed IRO starts their position at the end of June, 100% permanent IROs.

All staff within Safeguarding and Review receive two hours reflective supervision each month in line with supervision policy, with year to date supervisions completed at 90% at the end of quarter 4, within recommended levels but a reduction from previous quarters due to three members of staff being on sick leave at various points since the beginning of the year.

IRO Service:

All Looked After Children are allocated an IRO on completion of the first LAC notification and wherever possible any brothers and sisters also Looked After have the same IRO. A new monitoring system through the 1st Lac Review convening form is being introduced to ensure this is the case and where it is not possible the reasons for this are clearly recorded. LAC Reviews are scheduled in accordance with statutory timescales and when there are proposed changes to a child's care plan. Quarter 4 saw a slight improvement in Lac Review minutes being written and distributed within timescale compared with Quarter 3, although this remains an area for improvement and is being addressed through the use of case action trackers to identify work which remains outstanding at each supervision.

LAC Review minutes are written addressed to the child in the large majority of cases (and where this is appropriate to do so) and IROs evidence the developing relationship with the child through LAC Review minutes and consultations with children. An increasing number of LAC Reviews are undertaken as a series of meetings. Parents of children who are Looked After are kept informed of the progress of their child and have opportunity to contribute to care planning through the Lac Review process. Letters are now sent out to both the child and to parents inviting them to the first Lac Review and introducing them to the child's IRO, providing contact details, information about the frequency of Lac Reviews, how to contribute to care planning and how to make complaints or compliments. Parents are informed that in the very rare event they are not to be invited to their child's Lac Review at some point in the future they should be informed of this in advance and have a right to provide challenge to this through the Independent Reviewing Officer.

The restrictions arising from the Coronavirus pandemic have meant that since the end of March, in line with many other local authorities, all Lac Reviews and Child Protection Conferences are now conducted via video conferencing until further notice. Every effort has been made to ensure children and parents can be fully involved within Webex video based Child Protection Conferences and Lac 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 Lac Reviews are also conducted via video calls or telephone calls.

IRO Oversight in between LAC Reviews is clearly evidenced on children's files with IROs raising both informally and formally issues in respect of children's care planning and welfare and having improved significantly throughout the year remains a strength. This does requires regular management from the Principal IRO to maintain as the slight dip of 2% this quarter when the PIRO role was not in place has evidenced.

A significant drive has been undertaken at the end of Quarter 4 to identify children with a plan of long term foster care who need an assessment of whether their current placement can become their long term home, what support they and their carers need may to achieve this if a match is not assessed as

appropriate at the time, or what next steps may be needed to move on to other opportunities to achieve a long term, stable placement. This work will be the focus of IRO oversight and escalation in the coming months.

IROs are now accessing independent legal advice where required. Although no independent legal advice was accessed this quarter (this was undertaken twice last quarter), two IROs with similar queries in relation to case progression within court proceedings discussed these cases with the Principal IRO and the intention was to proceed to independent legal advice; at which point the case took a different turn and the independent legal advice was no longer required.

Child Protection Conference Service:

Within the Conference Chair role outline plans are largely recorded in a timely way and plans are becoming SMARTer, although 30% still require improvement to be more specific, measureable and outcome focused. This was picked up by Ofsted in their focused visit in December 2019. In accordance with the Neglect Strategy the use of the Graded Care Profile is part of planning for children on Child Protection plans because of neglect and provides a quantitative and qualitative measure of the daily lived experiences of children and how parents are able to meet their needs or where they struggle to do so. A review of Child Protection Plans in Quarter 4 identified Chairs are ensuring this is part of the Child Protection Plan for neglect cases on 88% of plans, and this has contributed to an improvement of the Graded Care Profile being completed on the majority of neglect cases by or shortly after the first review Conference.

Minutes are read and approved for distribution by Conference Chairs within timescales and Chairs will provide some oversight on the progression of CP plans. This is however an area which requires monitoring measures and targets to be established which recognize both the need not to impede time required to fulfill IRO duties and yet provide case oversight, particularly for cases where there is high risk to the child, risk of drift or non-compliance. With a current reduction in caseloads, this will be an area for development over the next six months.

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

IRO activity:

Quarter 4 - 1st LAC Reviews held in timescale = 100%. 2nd and subsequent Lac Review (total 169) held in timescale = 92%.

LAC review minutes in timescale = 67%, down from 76% for quarter 3.

Participation of children over 4 years of age in their LAC Review is at 98%. This includes attendance, completion of consultation forms, or their views being represented by someone advocating on their behalf. The use of the Mind of My Own app which is an additional means of participation is currently under evaluation with an extension of the contract being considered.

IRO Oversight case notes – 99% of children who are Looked After for longer than 3 months have at least 1 oversight (the 1st Review captures oversight prior to three months); 88% of all children Looked After have at least 2 (and usually many more) oversights within a twelve month period (this is also additional to the Lac Review process).

IRO Dispute Resolutions:

There were 7 formal dispute resolutions undertaken in Quarter 4, an increase of 1 on quarter 3. All 7 were resolved within timescales. None required

escalation to Assistant Director level.

IRO access to Independent Legal Advice:

This system is now established with two identified external designated family solicitors providing a service. In Quarter 4 there were two cases which IROs were about to access independent legal advice and this was no longer required due to a change in case direction.

CP Conference Chair / Independent Chair activity:

Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) within timescale – the figure for the year to date is 75%, the same as at Quarter 3 but not yet meeting the Improvement target of 90%. The reasons behind these delays have been looked at and a report provided to the Assistant Director. There are multiple reasons, with the largest contributors being delays in completion of S47 reports and Social Workers' reports to ICPCs.

The new duty system for Conference Chairs was implemented in full from 30 December 2019 to establish availability throughout the week for booking in ICPCs and 1st Lac Reviews. 100% of RCPCs are completed within timescales.

LADO and Case Progression Officer

The LADO annual report and the work of the LADO continues to receive positive feedback from partner agencies. A peer audit with Shropshire to share best practices and explore process learning was scheduled for March 2020 but has had to be temporarily postponed as it requires audit in person as no access to each other's IT systems. This will be rescheduled for the Autumn.

The case progression officer has provided close monitoring of cases in PLO, court proceedings, the now limited number of S20 cases (which are almost entirely within the Children with Disabilities Team) and children with placement orders awaiting adoption. The support to social workers to establish a good standard of court statement has been well received and Herefordshire has continued to maintain its timeliness within court proceedings, particularly where the challenge has been provided by the court to conclude within 16 rather than 26 weeks.

Learning Activity

The Head of Service has undertaken thematic audits of ICPCs and RCPCs, use of the Graded Care Profile, monitoring of Delegated Authority documents and achieving permanence through long term fostering in Quarter 4 and inform action plans. In order to establish matching is assessed in a timely way IROs have been tasked with informal and formal escalation on 75 cases if timescales are not met and this is now monitored each fortnight by the Head of Service to ensure progression.

Improving the robustness of challenge within the IRO service: The Dispute Resolution process has now been built into Mosaic and will go live in May 2020. This will enable Mosaic reporting on timescales and responses without the need for a separate tracking mechanism. Further thematic auditing work by the Head of Service will inform further target areas for informal and formal escalation, including challenge to any drift and delay in health / mental health interventions as well as the provision of regular reports from foster carers and fostering agencies on the day to day welfare of children in placement. These will take place in June and July 2020.

Learning from Complaints and Compliments:

There has been one complaint received, at the end of March 2020, which related to a family member having difficulty accessing the Webex video meeting for a Child Protection Conference and when arriving late into the meeting found themselves being referred to in the third person. The Principal IRO has responded to the complaint with timescale. Chairs have been advised to be vigilant to late arrivals and a welcome note on arriving into the meeting can be automated to ask people to introduce themselves and their relationship / role to the child if they are late to the meeting. Compliments have received from schools and parents about the quality of direct work with children at risk of exploitation. The personal adviser position has now been confirmed as a permanent role within the CE Team. There have also been compliments for Conference Chairs from both professionals and parents in their fair conduct of conferences and enabling views to be listened to when previous people felt unheard.

Areas of strength, evidence

1. Conference Chairs have increased the application of Graded Care Profiles (GCP) and review GCPs in Child Protection Plans; this is now on 88% of neglect case CP plans, with then GCP being completed either before or shortly after the first review conference on 64% of cases. While this still has further to progress, it is a growing area of improvement.
2. Feedback from partner agencies including schools, health and police is the training and support provided by the CE Team, information sharing through mapping and at Prevent and Disrupt multi agency meetings, as well as the direct 1:1 work with young people, has been extremely helpful in identifying and responding to reduce risks of exploitation in Herefordshire.
3. New duty system for Conference Chairs for ICPCs and 1st Lac Reviews was implemented during Quarter 4 and has worked well, with no problems identified by either business support in convening or for Conference Chairs. It has however been a period of very significant reduction in ICPCs so is as yet to be fully tested.
4. At the end of June 2020 the IRO/Conference Chair service will have 100% permanent staff. At the end of June 2019 this was 50%.

Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. Ensuring outcomes for children are linked to the tasks required of parents within Child Protection planning needs further development. Following this being addressed within team training days and supervisions with Conference Chairs, change will be achieved most directly with the implementation of Signs of Safety. Conference Chairs have completed two days general SOS training and will be undertaking two half days on Conference Chairing with SOS at the end of May and June 2020 via Webex. Although the implementation of SOS has been delayed due to the impact of Coronavirus restrictions, and further 5 day training will still be required, this maintains the momentum of learning the principles and applications of a social work model which is fundamentally outcome focused.
2. The role of IROs in providing high challenge as well as high support continues to be an area which needs cultural shift. Recommendations and informal escalations are made appropriately, then drift in escalation can sometimes arise from consideration of workloads and staffing changes rather than be formally escalated on behalf of the child. To address this the Head of Service and Principal IRO will implement action plans which include formal escalations by set dates. This has begun with the Matching Assessment action plan for 75 cases and will continue with escalation action plans arising from thematic audits of drift in health / mental health interventions and the absence of recordings from foster carers / fostering agencies.
3. Compliance with statutory timescales for completion of Lac Review minutes remains an issue for two IROs, one of whom is agency and will

	<p>be leaving mid-June with a permanent IRO coming into post. For the other IRO a tracker is now in use at each supervision to examine date of completion of minutes (this is still not yet able to be captured within Mosaic reporting as delay only identified once the workflow is completed). This will aid time management. Lac recommendations had previously been an area of good performance and dipped over the last two quarters, specifically for the agency IRO who will be leaving in mid-June. All IROs will use the tracker to present completion of lac review recommendations and minutes each month in supervision.</p> <p>Lac reviews in timescale dipped to 85% from 100% in quarter 3, due largely to cancellations caused by the extensive floods in February.</p>
--	--

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 early help practice has just lost its way and everyone is working makes you so unhappy.

122



Summary: Child Exploitation/Contextual Safeguarding (Barb Langstaffe – Head of Service 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)

Children and young people identified as being at risk of all forms of exploitation have an Exploitation Risk Assessment, from cases opened to assessment, on CIN, CP and Risk Management Plans, children who are Looked After and Care Leavers experiencing challenging transitions to adulthood and independence. For all children and young people open to Children’s Safeguarding their Social Worker will complete the Exploitation Risk Assessment with oversight from an Exploitation Coordinator prior to being authorised by the relevant team manager. The revised assessment document now not only captures the signs and likelihood of various forms of exploitation to assess the level of risk, it locates the context in which it takes place and the impact of experiencing or being at risk of exploitation in a wider variety of domains of the child’s life. These eleven domains include family relationships and where they live; emotional, physical and sexual health; education; criminality; substance misuse and exposure to risky people and environments. Prioritizing partnership understanding and input into Exploitation Safeguarding across agencies over the last twelve months through the work of the Safeguarding Partnership and multi-agency training means

the risks, strengths and impact of exploitation across these areas of children's daily lives can be more comprehensively understood and more targeted actions taken to meet the needs of children and young people who would otherwise be exposed to the controlling relationships which enable exploitation.

All children and young people at moderate or significant risk of / actual exploitation have a multi-agency Safety Plan which is reviewed on a multi-agency basis through Risk Management Meetings (RMMs), their frequency being determined by the level of risk for each young person. The level of risk is also reviewed at every RMM as a shared multi-agency decision. The Safety Planning guidance supports the development of robust Safety Plans for young people at risk of exploitation and young people who go missing, and supports effective application of the Home Office Disruption Toolkit. Return home interviews are offered to all young people who go missing in Herefordshire, within 3 working days in most cases or within 24 hours in cases where children are not already receiving a service at Level 4. This means that the content of return home interviews can be shared with the MASH prior to a decision being made following a missing incident, which is now always responded to as a MASH Contact.

At the end of Quarter 4 the Child Exploitation (CE) Team consists of two qualified social workers as CE Coordinators, one Family Support Worker and one Personal Adviser. CE Coordinators are qualified social workers experienced in the area of Child Exploitation. Their role is to provide advice, support and oversight to social workers assessing and intervening with children and young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation. In addition to chairing subsequent Risk Management Meetings, they liaise with partner agencies to share information, identify links between networks of children and perpetrators and track case progression. This work includes weekly meetings with police and attendance at the monthly Prevent and Disrupt multi agency forums. The Family Support Worker undertakes Return Home Interviews for children who have gone missing and direct work with children, parents and families to recognize signs of exploitation and strategies to reduce risk. The Personal Adviser also undertakes direct work with children and young people to explore the cause and effect of exploitative relationships and networks. In addition, CE Coordinators, the Family Support Worker and the Personal Adviser contribute to the Safeguarding Partnership Contextual Safeguarding training, community awareness raising and learning events for social workers.

The structure is due to change with the introduction of a Managing Practitioner role, reflecting the development of the CE group from a single CE Co-ordinator 18 months ago into a bespoke service supporting both Children's Safeguarding and wider partnership agencies. The Managing Practitioner will line manage the CE Coordinators who will in turn provide supervision to the Support Worker and Personal Adviser. The Managing Practitioner will be line managed by the Head of Service Safeguarding and Review. This change in structure consolidates the development of the service area into a team with maturing organization structure and responsibilities. These will be clearly set out by the end of Quarter One 2020/21 with a defined referral mechanism, job specifications, case allocations, duties and finally the criteria for completion of work and case closure to the CE Team. This in turn will allow for evaluation of the impact of the service both for individual children and for the efficacy of the service delivery for Herefordshire children and young people.

The impact of Covid-19 has seen Risk Management Meetings, weekly police liaison and monthly Prevent and Disrupt forums being undertaken through video conferencing in the last few weeks of Quarter 4. The necessary adaptations to working remotely went well and the systems allow for continuity in these service areas with little disruption for agencies. The participation of parents and young people has been maintained although for some getting access through the technology has proved more problematic. Where this is the case social workers have supported children and families directly. A greater impact has been on the direct work with young people, with this direct work and Return Home Interviews being conducted through Whatsapp. Feedback is this

presents greater challenge in engaging children. As a consequence the frequency of shorter Keep In Touch calls has been increased and will continue for longer to support the relationship building which is at the heart of engaging young people directly.

The launch of The Children’s Society direct preventative work with children and young people at level 3 or below (not open to Children’s Safeguarding as CIN, CP or Lac) was delayed in March due to Covid-19. This has been rescheduled to the 11th May. The CE Team will coordinate step up advice and step down preparation work with the two workers of The Children’s Society.

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

Quantitative information

Performance data collection has very recently been refined and identifies delay in progressing to Risk Management Meetings (RMM) chaired by Team Managers where an outcome of risk of exploitation is identified as moderate or above. The new weekly reporting will enable this drift to be managed by the CE Team to press for convening forms to be completed and sent to business support by social workers. Further refinements to the Mosaic system will also help improvements, such as requiring the date of the RMM to be set at point of Manager Authorisation of the assessment, and adjustments have recently corrected data to ensure Return Home Interviews are recorded where these can be achieved and not when a child has returned and gone missing within a matter of hours, generating a subsequent Missing incident.

Qualitative information

Feedback from communication with schools identified teachers really impressed with the direct work being undertaken by the personal advisor working with young people.

Areas of strength, evidence

1. Tracker expanded in March 2020 to identify networks of risk and support between the young people/families, agencies involved, multiple risk factors, completion of RMMs, locations, use of CAWNs and Missing Trigger plans. This will be updated every four weeks, covering current cohort of 50+ children and young people.
2. Ability to provide advice and support to social work teams and partner agencies, skilling them up to more effectively recognise and respond to exploitation.
3. Providing the same level of service to care leavers at risk of exploitation – not many local authorities appear to be doing this.
4. Resources pack available to all social work teams to share with other professionals, young people, parents and carers.

Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. Exploitation Risk Assessments need to be completed within timescales. Changes to Mosaic to incorporate a next actions step to trigger CE Risk Assessments arising from strategy meetings, RMMs, conferences and assessments, which can then be reportable on, are scheduled for build and implementation by the end of July 2020. This will identify to the CE Team when a CE assessment is required by the child’s social worker and they can support and push the completion of this within timescales or escalate if this is not achieved.
2. The NSPCC Self-Service Audit on Harmful Sexual Behaviour has been completed by the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Review. Unfortunately the NSPCCs presentation bringing together findings

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding training embedded with good attendance and feedback. 6. Effective joint working with Police including weekly briefings, 2 days co-location and revised Prevent & Disrupt arrangements including significant risk case reviews. 	<p>across partner agencies and moving to next steps has been postponed due to the current restrictions. However, the self-service audit highlighted numerous areas for development, with some clear pathways already emerging for future work both within Children’s Safeguarding and across partner agencies. Dependent on the rescheduling of the NSPCC presentation, this may be progressed from the summer of 2020. There will be significant roles to be played by Conference Chairs / IROs and the CE team within new approaches.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Safeguarding Partnership Exploitation Group remains committed to raising the profile of exploitation across communities and agencies; pace has however slowed and requires an injection of vigour. Branding and development of communication strategy will be developed at the next group meeting, now to be monthly to ensure progression of goals. 4. Develop links with The Children’s Society to improve preventative and step down interventions and provide continuity from level 4 to level 3 work. This will be starting from 11.05.20. 5. Increase understanding of the NRM criteria, process and its benefits across the professional network and provide training to first responders – originally scheduled for March 2020, this training to be scheduled in to an extended Prevent and Disrupt multi agency forum in June 2020. 6. Extend the remit of contextual safeguarding to incorporate peer on peer abuse and harmful sexual behavior. This will be informed by the NSCPP multi agency audit outcomes – due to be fed back in April 2020 but postponed. There are however learning pathways emerging from the self-audit of Children’s Safeguarding that inform future planning and this will be included in proposals for Improvement planning by August 2020.
---	---

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 early help practice has just lost its way and 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)

Some improvement has been achieved during Q4 in a number of key areas in the CP and Court Service, with a focus on recruitment and effective throughput of casework, both of which have resulted in lower caseloads across all 3 social work teams. Quality of work and case recording is now starting to improve, however this remains inconsistent, as does the frequency and quality of management oversight. 2 permanent Senior Practitioners were appointed at the end of Q4 which means we now have a fully staffed, permanent management / Senior Prac team. The service continues to struggle to recruit permanent, experienced social workers and excluding the Seniors, there are only 6 permanent social workers, 2 of which are ASYEs and only 2 social workers who have more than 2 years post qualified experience.

Agency staff turnover continues to be high, however with concerted effort to remain in regular contact with recruitment agencies we are able to recruit agency social workers relatively easily, using the daily rate scheme. Recruitment of ASYEs continues to be slow and links with Universities appear weak. Further work is planned in Q1 20/21 to attract ASYEs into the service and we have invested in an additional resource to support 6 further ASYEs in CP and Court over the next 12 months.

Work has taken place to improve the throughput of work in the service, including the effectiveness of case transfers and closures and applying appropriate thresholds, and when added to the improvements achieved in the Assessment service by retaining and strengthening practice in relation to Child in Need plans, this reducing the number of cases transferred to the service where children are made subject to a CP plan, the overall number of cases held in CP and Court has reduced from 331 at the end of Q3, to 256 at the end of Q4. At the end of Q4, only 2 social workers had caseloads of more than 20 (21 cases each) and the average caseload was 15. ASYE caseloads are appropriately protected with reference to the ASYE policy. With the exception of the continual turnover of agency staff, the service now has the right conditions in which high quality social work practice can flourish. Performance data indicates that compliance with statutory timescales and local practice standards are improving, however this needs to be demonstrated consistently and improve in quality in a number of key areas. In order to counteract the impact of staff turnover, two areas we will be focusing heavily on in Q1 20/21 are the quality of management oversight and developing the Senior Practitioner role, including a robust induction for all new staff.

In Q4 a number of improvements were made to increase the effectiveness of performance management and to enable each team to share responsibility for statutory timescales being met in a planned and proactive way. Each team meets twice a week for a brief performance meeting to review the work planned for that week and the week ahead and ensure there is sufficient resource to cover this across their team. Performance data is used on a daily and weekly basis and shared by team managers with all social workers to ensure that activity is undertaken within timescales and promptly recorded.

As a result, the early indications of improvement in Q3 for statutory visits being completed and recorded in timescales has continued to be built upon in Q4 and at the end of Q4 performance was very close to the 95% target for all 3 social work teams across CIN, CP and LAC visits. Fewer strategy discussions and s47 investigations are now taking place as practice expectations have been clarified, however the service has continued to struggle to complete s47

investigations and Child and Family Assessments within timescales. The small number of s47 investigations undertaken in the service makes the performance data very 'spikey'. Both of these areas of performance will be revisited in Q1 20/21 and the service will be adopting the same approach used in the Assessment service to ensuring that Child and Family Assessments have a clear purpose, plan, and managers and social workers discuss their progress regularly to ensure they are proportionate and completed within statutory timescales.

The regularity of personal supervision has improved however the way this is currently reported makes the data 'spikey'. In March 3 personal supervisions were not completed within the month, with 2 of these being 1 day later. In 20/21 the data will also be reported as a YTD figure which will provide more meaningful information. The frequency of case supervision has also improved, however following an issue in the reporting method being identified and corrected in February, the data for March shows a decline in performance. In Q1 the target is for 100% of cases to have a case supervision recorded within the maximum timescales of 3 months. The quality of case supervision continues to be inconsistent and poor in some instances. Managers rarely record their oversight of cases through ad hoc discussions, which happen daily, as observed by the HoS. This means that they have much more oversight of cases than the case records indicate. We urgently need to find a solution to this in Q1 20/21, including the development of group supervision and the Senior role, and planned, protected time for managers to record their oversight.

Response to audit actions has continued to be a challenge in some teams, however overall this is an improved picture. In February there were 16 cases with outstanding audit actions and this has now reduced to 2. There is now greater compliance with completion of the Graded Care Profile for children who have a CP plan due to neglect, however this continue to be completed mainly by family support workers and currently there is no mosaic workflow or reporting available to promote the use of this tool more widely. An audit of GCP was undertaken in January 2020 and identified 27 children subject to a CP plan due to neglect who did not have a GCP completed. This has now reduced to 3 outstanding and a further 5 in the process of being completed. However, this improvement only relates to those children identified in the January audit as there is no mechanism currently to monitor this using contemporaneous data.

Improvements have been made to the HoS oversight of cases in PLO and care proceedings, however there continue to be some examples of drift and inadequate care planning which risk causing delays for children. Further improvements are currently under consideration for implementation in Q1 20/21, to further streamline processes and ensure our work in PLO and proceedings is clearly planned, proactive, structured and completed within timescales. Q4 has seen a net reduction of cases in PLO from 40 to 33 due to cases being progressed more effectively within timescales. Most care proceedings conclude without difficulties and following a significant increase in care proceedings being initiated in Q3, Q4 has seen a net reduction of children subject to care proceedings, from 52 to 34.

A review of family support services was concluded in January and in March 2020 changes were implemented so that family support workers were realigned into either the Assessment service or the CP and Court service. The ECHO (edge of care and reunification) team has been implemented however the appointment of internal family support workers to this team has led to delays in fully implementing the revised family support model. As a result there are 4 families currently awaiting family support work in the CP and Court service, however the ECHO workers are now being allocated reunification work from the LAC service. FSW interviews are due to take place w/c 20th April 2020 to recruit to 7.3FTE vacancies across the Assessment service and CP and Court service. During Q1 and Q2 we will continue to work with commissioning colleagues and partner agencies to develop the multi-disciplinary elements of ECHO, including

training for ECHO workers in domestic abuse perpetrator work and NVR (Non Violent Resistance), co-located substance misuse support, and the appointment of a systemic family therapist.

The following areas of development identified for Q4 have been completed:

1. Mailshot targeted at agencies included in the higher rate agency scheme – why their clients should consider Herefordshire including direct quotes from current agency staff – this has been completed and alongside a concerted effort from Hoople colleagues, business support staff and the HoS we continue to receive a steady stream of agency CVs, using the higher rate scheme.
2. Revised duty system arrangements and proscribed time for social workers and managers to complete case recordings - this has been completed with the result that case recording of visits has improved, evidenced in the improved performance data. Managers still struggle to identify protected time to record their oversight.
3. Caseload management reporting and process implemented to ensure personal supervision consistently takes places and is recorded and to ensure an understanding of the nature of caseloads in addition to the numbers – Jan 2020 – completed, we now have a clear understanding of the complexity of work across the teams to ensure that individual workers are not overwhelmed and to ensure that ASYEs have appropriate caseloads. Managers now always record their personal supervision data in time for monthly reporting.
4. Implementation of twice weekly performance meetings for each team manager with their team to ensure all visits are completed and recorded within timescales and to promote teams supporting each other at times when court work demands are higher for individual workers. HOS to observe 1 per month for each team manager – this has been implemented and is now working effectively across all 3 teams, with the resultant impact that social workers support each other and activity such as visits can be planned and prioritised proactively.
5. Review of family support services – this has been completed and FSWs realigned to the Assessment service or will be aligned to the CP and Court service following recruitment to vacancies.
6. HOS to provide clear expectations for staff with implementation of a core group / CIN review agenda and visits recording – completed.
7. Revised transfer checklist to be implemented in all teams – completed.

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

Please refer to Q4 improvement plan for all data relied upon for the above narrative.

Areas of strength, evidence

1. There are a core group of permanent staff – both social workers and family support workers in the CP/Court team who are skilled and committed to staying in Herefordshire.
2. The family court which sits in Worcestershire is one of the best performing courts in the country for completion of care proceedings with 26 weeks.

Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. PLO task and finish group took place in Q4 and has now concluded. Final amendments to an Early Permanence Handbook and relevant procedures and templates to be completed by end of April 20 with changes being implemented at the beginning of May 20.
2. Embedding the use of case summaries – throughout Q1.
3. HOS to observe a minimum of 2 supervisions per quarter – this needs to be embedded in Q1.
4. HOS to develop practice standards for case supervision – May 20.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Both Essex and good Ofsted found, as have we, that the service consists of quality social workers who know the children and families they are working with. 4. The family support service provide consistently high quality support to children and families and recent realignment will allow for greater responsiveness to need. 5. ECHo has been established and reunification work is now being allocated. 6. Morale in the service is high and there is significant enthusiasm, energy and commitment to achieving change. 7. Social Work Academy support is helping to improve the confidence and competence of social workers in completing more complex work. 8. We now have a full establishment of permanent managers and Senior Practitioners. 9. Throughput of cases is now largely effective and caseloads are more manageable. ASYE caseloads are appropriately protected. 10. Teams use performance data on a daily and weekly basis to ensure each team is able to undertake activity (primarily visits) within statutory timescales. 11. The vast majority of social workers have personal supervision every month 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Find a solution to allow managers to record their daily oversight of cases – May 20. 6. Focus on case supervisions with a target of 100% case supervisions recorded within 3 months by end of Q1. 7. Implement Assessment service approach to conducting Child and Family Assessments – May 20. 8. Define and develop the Senior Prac role, with lower caseloads to enable them to fulfil their roles – commencing 28th April and to be completed by end of Q1. 9. Implement group supervision approach led by Senior Pracs – by end of Q1. 10. Introduce social worker-led practice develop sessions into service meetings to share direct work tools, research and best practice – May 20. 11. Robust induction for all new staff – by end of Q1. 12. Recruit an additional 6 ASYEs and implement dedicated resource for ASYE practice development – June 20. 13. Implement revised team model to enable the separation of CP work from care proceedings and co-allocation of PLO to ensure PLO is fully frontloaded – by June 20, however this is also dependent on recruitment. 14. Introduction of Genopro genogram software – May 20. 15. Transfer and closure checklists and processes to be built into Mosaic – May 20. 16. Develop GCP Mosaic workflow – by June 20. 17. Recruit to all FSW vacancies – April 20. 18. Continue to develop multi-disciplinary dimensions of ECHo
--	---

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: LAC 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 4 there were 352 children in care which equates to 98 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.

An Alternatives to Care panel which is chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding was introduced in September 2018. This panel decides whether care proceedings should be initiated, whether children should be admitted to care under Section 20, and reviews decisions to admit children to care in an unplanned way.

The local authority has had a lower rate of children leaving care than statistical neighbours and our focus is upon identifying children who could safely return to their parents care or who could be cared for under a Special Guardianship Order. Progress was slow with continued drift and delay in the progression of assessments and applications to Court which is further impacted by a risk averse culture. This is now being robustly challenged and care orders were discharged for 8 children during quarter 4 with applications for a further 17 children with legal services or already issued.

Staff teams within the looked after children's team are relatively stable which enables Social Workers to get to know children well and establish trusting relationships. Performance within these teams improved significantly during 2019/20 following the appointment of a second team manager allowing for increased management support and challenge. Both teams are now consistently meeting targets for visits and supervision.

The 16+ team has had a significant change in Social Workers following a period of stability. Performance in this team has improved during quarter 4 although is not yet consistently good for visits and further improvement is required to meet targets for supervision. Pathway plans for looked after children have not always completed to timescale or updated prior to LAC reviews as they should be. This is being addressed and the team are on target to have all Pathway plans updated by the end of April 2020.

Placement stability for children in care is good with the numbers experiencing more than 3 placements in the last 12 months at 8% at the end of March, which is below the rate nationally and for statistical neighbours. The service is not complacent though and we continue to work to reduce this further by improving the quality of support, supervision, and training provided to our foster carers. 74% of children have been in the same placement for over 2 ½ years which is in line with national indicators although this will be affected by our high numbers of children in care and so is likely to reduce as our plans to reduce the numbers of children in care are progressed. Despite good levels of placement stability too many children have not been formally long-term matched with foster carers and this is focus for improvement.

There are not enough foster carers to meet demand and so there has been a refreshed focus upon recruitment activity which has seen an increase in the number of enquiries during 2019/20 that is resulting in more applications. A new fostering workflow within Mosaic was implemented in September. Initial performance reports have been completed that need further development but will enable greater scrutiny and management oversight of this area of the service. The number of children and young people placed more than 20 miles from home is relatively low.

Not all children and young people in care have an up to date delegated authority agreement in place. A performance report is now available that is enabling more effective oversight but requires amendments before reporting can be accurately relied upon.

At the end of March 37 adopted children were waiting for their life story book and/or later life letter which is slightly reduced in comparison with quarter 3. Additional resource has been agreed for the service and the current pandemic is offering an opportunity for the service to deploy staff who usually supervise contact for children with their parents to focus on this area of work. It is anticipated that the backlog will be cleared by the end of June 2020. A centralised system for monitoring this work on an ongoing basis is established and if there is evidence of a backlog building up then remedial action can be taken urgently.

Our adoption service joined Adoption Central England (ACE) on 1 July 2019 a smooth transition for children with a plan for adoption, prospective adopters, and adopters was achieved. Our “early permanency hub” based within the Child Protection and Court team supports Children’s Social Workers in adoption work and provide a very helpful bridge with ACE. Already there has been a welcome increase in children who have been placed in Foster to Adopt placements which we hope to further build on as our pre-birth planning work improves.

Virtual School

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, LAC 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.

In the last quarter, 18.8% of PEP meetings for statutory school age and early years children had no social worker in attendance. This is a slight improvement on the previous quarter. However, for children in post 16 provision, the number of PEP meeting with no social worker in attendance increased to 35%. This issue is raised with team managers. The LAC education team are attending team meetings to remind social workers of the importance of attending PEP meetings and their responsibilities.

The Virtual School team feels strongly that social workers (especially in the CWD and LAC 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.

The challenge offered by the Virtual School, including more robust internal scrutiny and quality assurance has led to an improvement of the quality of PEPs completed by schools. The contribution from social workers has declined in the last quarter. For statutory school age and early year children, social workers did not complete 31% of documents this rose to 68% for young people in post 16 provision. This issue is raised with team managers.

Provisional end of Key Stage education outcomes (2019) for children in Key Stages 1, 2 are above those for looked after regionally and nationally. Provisional Key Stage 4 outcomes in key assessment measures e.g. Attainment 8 (A8) are above regional and national outcomes for LAC in England in 2019. Further analysis shows that the attainment gap between Herefordshire's looked after children and 'all' Herefordshire children reduced in 2019, most notably at Key Stage 1.

Local placement availability is not impacting on school placements so significantly in the last quarter. Only 2 children (siblings) have experienced an unexpected school move because of a placement move in the last quarter. Of the 21 young people in year 11 who have been in care for more than 12 months, 4 have moved school and care placement in the last 12 months.

Health

Compliance with meeting timescales for completion of Health Assessments has improved during Quarter 4. 100% of initial health assessments were offered within statutory timeframes with 76% completed within statutory timeframes. 100% of children and young people placed in County due a review health assessment were offered an appointment within statutory timescales with 86% completed within timescales. One young person refused a health assessment.

Challenges remain in ensuring children and young people placed out of County receive a health assessment within timescale. Where children and young people are placed close to Herefordshire then the Herefordshire team continue to provide health assessments and the team completed 3 during quarter 4 for children and young people placed out of County.

Performance indicators for registration with a GP (100%), immunisations (96%) remain high. Children seeing a dentist within 6 months needs to improve further (85%). The LAC health team has now been expanded and this is enabling more support to foster carers, children and young people and in particular a focus on emotional and mental health.

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 July 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.

An annual celebration event was held in September which was well attended by children, young people and their foster carers and where the achievements of many were recognised and celebrated.

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

- Monthly performance data shows performance and trends in comparison with national and statistical neighbours (where available)
- Themed monthly audits are completed which show areas of strength and those for improvement
- Regular team meetings and managers meetings provide forum for open discussion and reflection upon what is working well and what needs to improve

Areas of strength, evidence

1. The number and rate of children being admitted to care has reduced
2. Improved compliance with timescales for statutory visits
3. Improved performance in providing personal and case supervision
4. Placement stability
5. Increase in children leaving care via SGO or reunification
6. SEEds is providing an intervention that is valued by Social Workers and schools
7. Provisional data shows that outcomes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 are above those achieved nationally by LAC in England.

Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. Reducing the number of children in care by progressing care plans for reunification or SGO where this is assessed as in the best interests of children
2. Sustaining improvement in performance in relation to statutory visits and supervision so that targets are consistently met
3. Increasing the number of children who are long-term matched
4. Completion and review of Pathway plans within timescales
5. Increasing the number of foster carers
6. Ensuring all children have a regularly reviewed delegated authority form completed

<p>8. LAC health team has been expanded.</p>	<p>7. Reduction in the number of adopted children waiting for later life letters and life story books 8. Attendance and contribution of Social Workers to PEP meetings 9. Timeliness of LAC health assessments, particularly those placed out of County</p>
--	---

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.



134

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)

Care leavers are supported by the 16+ team and for a small number of young people the Children with Disabilities team. There has been a significant turnover of social workers within the team recently although there has been stability amongst personal advisors enabling relationships young people to develop trusted relationships with their workers.

Mark Riddell, National Implementation Advisor for care leavers, visited Herefordshire in September 2018 and again in May 2019 to review our progress. Mr. Riddell reported that our care leavers told him that “it is good to be a care leaver in Herefordshire”. In May 2019 we were able to demonstrate that we had taken forward many of his recommendations to us.

Our published performance data in relation to care leavers has been very poor in past years and did not accurately reflect the work of the team. Much work has been done to understand and rectify the issues impacting upon this which have been partly recording and partly reporting. This is much improved although further work to embed this and ensure that the service has accurate and accessible data on a weekly basis continues. At the end of March 85% of care leavers are reported to be in touch with the service which is slightly lower than either national or statistical neighbours.

Care leavers in suitable accommodation is reported as 83% which is slightly lower than national and statistical neighbours. Much work is being done to improve the accommodation options available to our care leavers. We are focusing upon growing the number of in house supported lodging providers as well as commissioned alternatives in Herefordshire. Citizen Housing provides 30 bed foyers across the County which the service and Housing Solutions Team can refer directly to. The overall contract for this service will be re-commissioned in 2020 and work is underway to assess what would best meet need of our care leaver population. This has established that we have a large cohort with low needs, a small group with moderate needs but a large cohort with complex needs and a small cohort with very complex needs which the foyers are not the right service for. The Council has invested in purchasing a building which will provide 5 beds for care leavers with complex needs. The unit is based in the city centre and a 24/7 support service has now been commissioned with the service planned to commence in July 2020 with building works having been delayed due to Corona virus.

A growing number of care leavers with complex needs arising from poor mental health, risk of exploitation and substance misuse are placed with supported accommodation providers. There are limited providers within Herefordshire and so some young people are placed out of County. Together with commissioners we are working to develop the local market. Currently we are concerned that the quality of support provided to some of our care leavers has been very poor. Our Placements Team are completing regular monitoring visits and together with the 16+ team concerns are addressed robustly and young people moved where necessary.

At the end of March only 43% of care leavers were reported as engaged in education, employment or training. This is very low and is a priority for improvement. Training options in Herefordshire are fairly limited and this impacts on the choices available for young people especially if they are excluded from attending a provider. The 16+ team work with Landau who are funded to reduce the number of young people who are NEET in the County. Landau provide a weekly drop-in based at the office and it is hoped that this will help to increase the number of our care leavers engaged in education, training or employment. During the last year the Council has employed 3 care leavers as apprentices which is positive however this needs to develop into a rolling programme and commitment.

The Council has a published [Care Leavers covenant](#). The Council provides council tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 25. The Council is keen to progress its own Care Leavers covenant and is likely to be an early adopter working with the national lead.

Audits have evidenced improvement in SMART planning by the team.

Pathway plans for care leavers have not always been completed to timescale or reviewed as they should be. The team is on target for all care leavers to have an up to date pathway plan by the end of April 2020.

Additional resource has been agreed for the LAC health team and staff have now been recruited. This will enable a service to be offered to care leavers and greater time to engage with older looked after children who are reluctant to meet with LAC nurses.

Relationships with Adults Social Care are improving although there remains concern that some very vulnerable care leavers are not eligible for a service. This is particularly true of young people at risk of exploitation, some of whom are care leavers, and the best way to meet this need is being considered.

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

- Monthly performance data shows performance and trends in comparison with national and statistical neighbours (where available)
- Themed monthly audits are completed which show areas of strength and those for improvement
- Regular team meetings and managers meetings provide forum for open discussion and reflection upon what is working well and what needs to improve

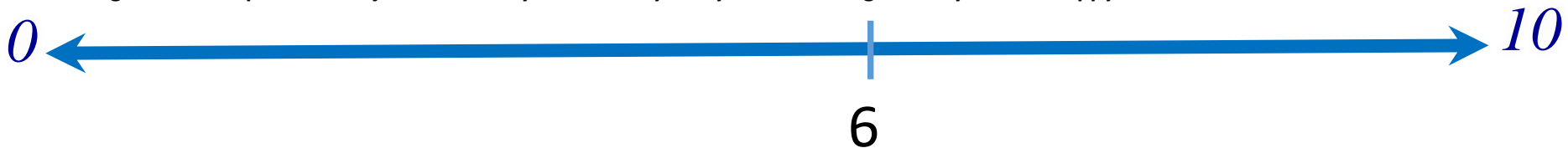
Areas of strength, evidence

1. Investment into the service to reduce caseloads and increase management capacity
2. Central office that provides drop in service
3. Published data shows improvement in performance in relation to “in touch” and “suitable accommodation”
4. Availability of crash pad and taster flat options
5. Purchase of building and commissioning of support to provide new 5 bed unit for care leavers with complex needs from July 2020
6. Partnership with Landau to increase number of care leavers in education, training or employment.

Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. Need to ensure data accurately reflects performance in the team and that further improvement is achieved and sustained through weekly review of data by managers and planning with staff
2. Number of care leavers in education, training or employment needs to increase
3. Quality of pathway plans
4. Services for vulnerable care leavers who don’t meet criteria for adult social care or mental health services

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 recent 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.
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.
4. Staffing stability and a strong team ethos supports team members to deliver a good service to clients.

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.
4. Developing a greater understanding of the Mental Capacity, DOLs and LPS across all social workers in the team.
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.

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 establish 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 an 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)
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.
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.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 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). 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.
--	---

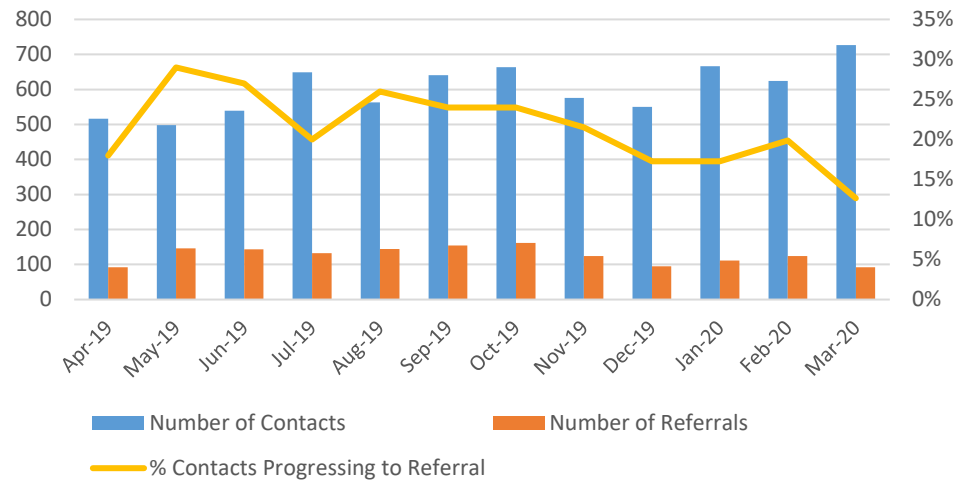
Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working;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



March 2020

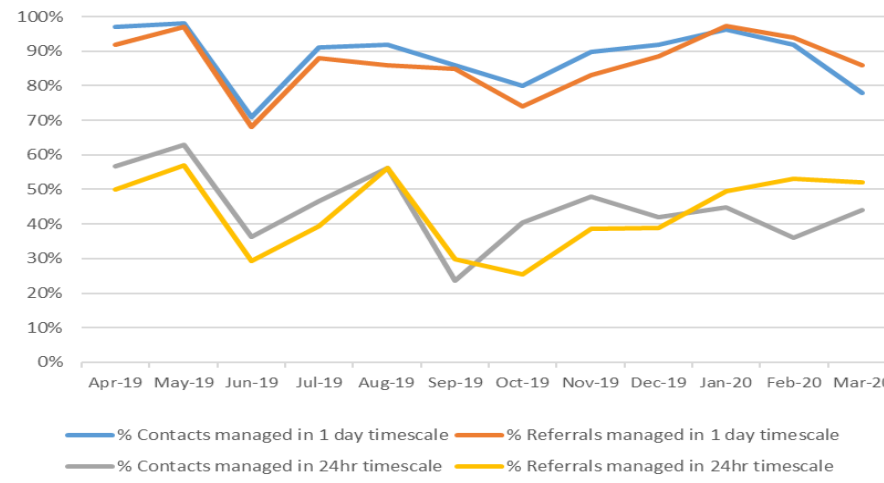
Referrals & Assessment

Contact & Referrals



Contacts and Referrals: In March, 13% of contacts progressed to referral. This is a 7% point decrease in progression from last month. The YTD figure is 21%.

Contacts & Referral Management



Contact & Referrals Management: The above graph shows the proportion of Contacts and Referrals which have been managed in 24hrs and 1 day timescales.

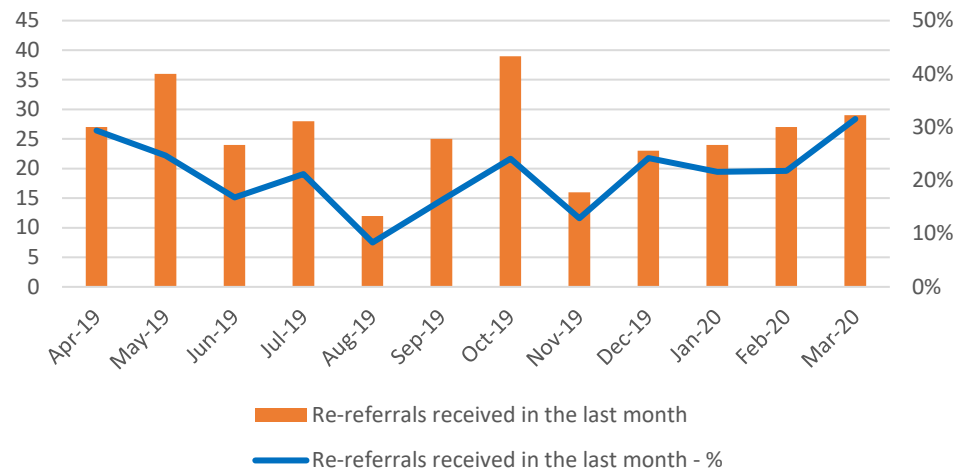
Contacts managed in 24hrs increased in March to 44% (from 36% in February). Referrals managed in 24hrs decreased slightly to 52% (from 53% in February). The year to date % for contacts is 88% and for referrals is 86% completed in 1 day and 44% for contacts and 43% for referrals completed in 24hrs.

Source of Contacts and Referrals	Total Contacts	% of Contacts	Total Referrals	% of Referrals	% of Contacts Progressed to Referral
Anonymous	9	1.24%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Education Services	1	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Health services - A&E (accident and emergency department)	34	4.68%	7	7.61%	20.59%
Health services - General Practitioner (GP)	5	0.69%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Health services - Health Visitor	3	0.41%	2	2.17%	66.67%
Health services - Other eg. hospice	5	0.69%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Health services - Other primary health	31	4.26%	4	4.35%	12.90%
Health services - School Nurse	2	0.28%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Individual - acquaintance eg. neighbours / child minders	1	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Individual - family member / relative / carer	16	2.20%	5	5.43%	31.25%
Individual - other Individuals e.g. strangers / MPs	2	0.28%	1	1.09%	50.00%
Individual - self	1	0.14%	0	0.00%	0.00%
LA services - social care, for example, from another local authority's adults social care	61	8.39%	23	25.00%	37.70%
Other - including children's centres, independent agency providers or voluntary	48	6.60%	6	6.52%	12.50%
Other Legal Agency - incl. courts, probation, immigration, CAFCASS or prison	43	5.91%	7	7.61%	16.28%
Police	418	57.50%	29	31.52%	6.94%
Schools	47	6.46%	8	8.70%	17.02%
Total	727		92		12.65%

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

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

Number of Re-referrals



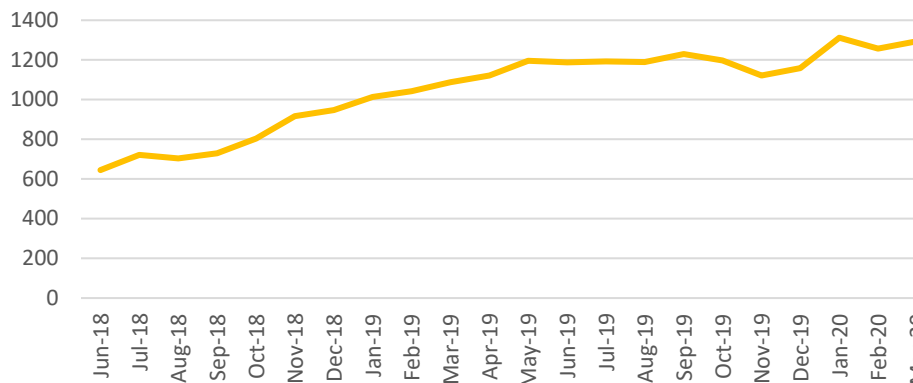
Percentage of Re-referrals: The re-referral rate is based on referrals on cases that have previously been open in the last 12 months. The proportion of re-referrals in March was 32%, which is a 10% point increase from February.

Re-referral % comparison							
Hfd March	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
32%	20%	21%	20%	22%	19%	19%	20%

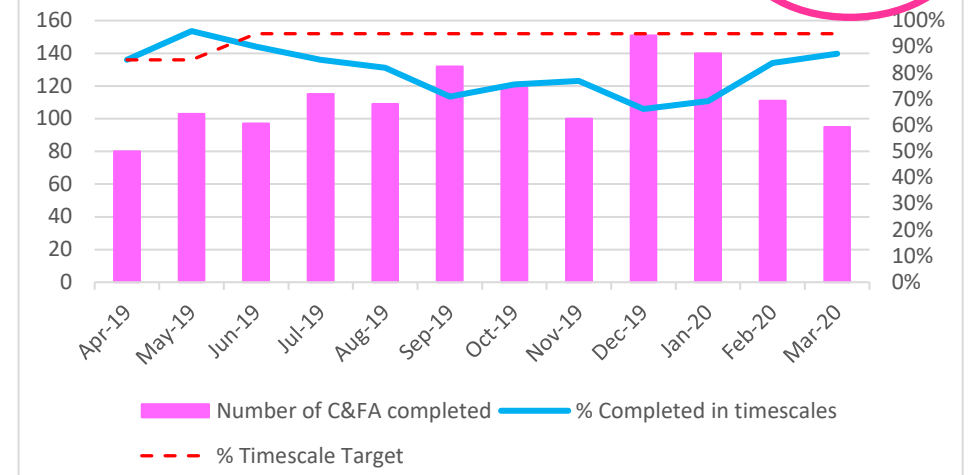
*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

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

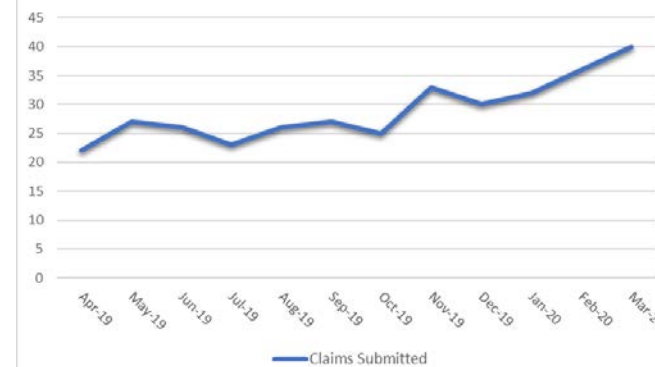


Child & Family Assessments (CAFAs): In March, the number of CAFAs completed fell to 95. Of those assessments completed 87% met timescales, this is an increase compared to last month, but falls short of our 95% target. The YTD position is has now risen slightly to 80% (from 79% last month).

Assessments in timescale % comparison							
Hfd March	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
87%	80%	83%	79%	84%	81%	84%	87%

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

Families First PBR - Last 12 months



Families First

Over the last 12 months, there has been a steady increase in the number of claims submitted.

Incomplete Child & Family Assessments: As at the end of March, there were 156 assessments awaiting completion. The table below summarises where the incomplete assessments sit.

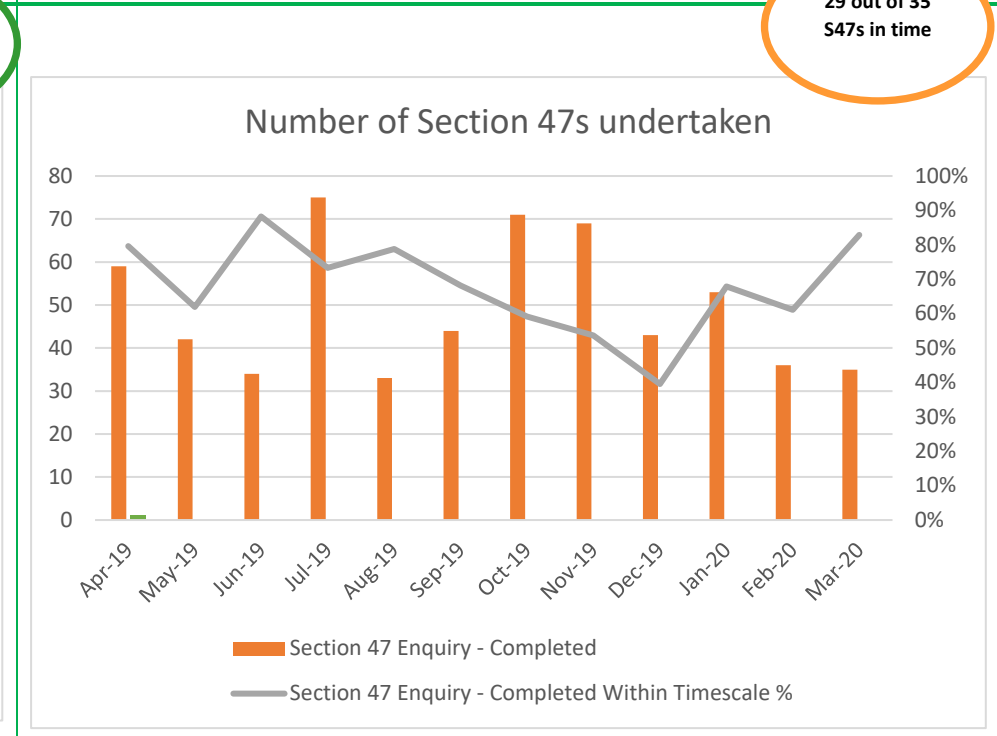
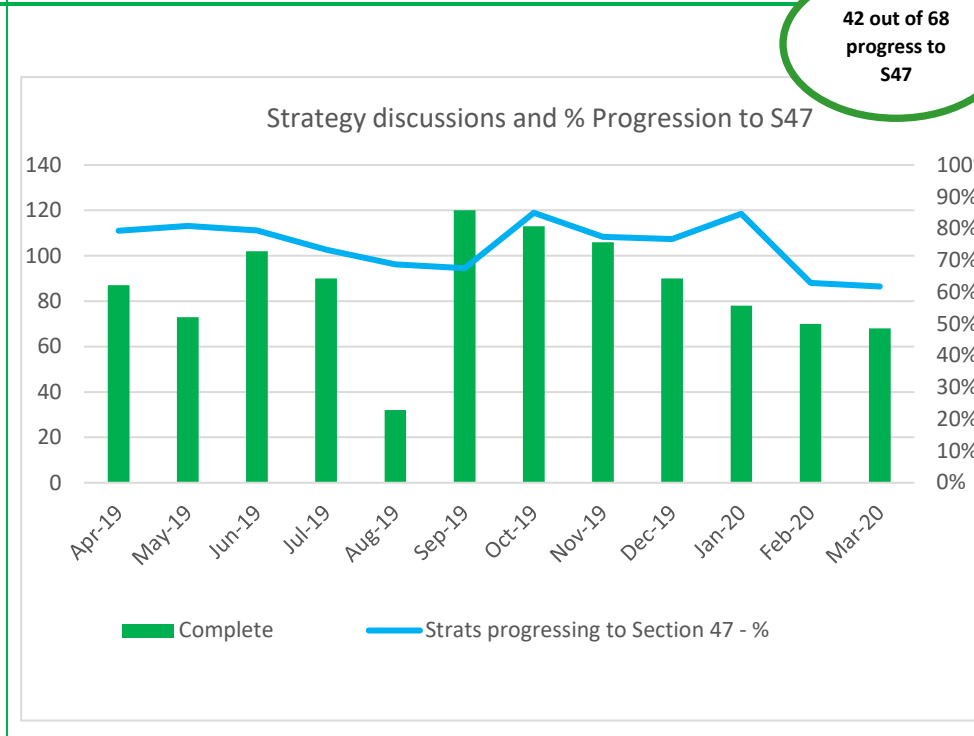
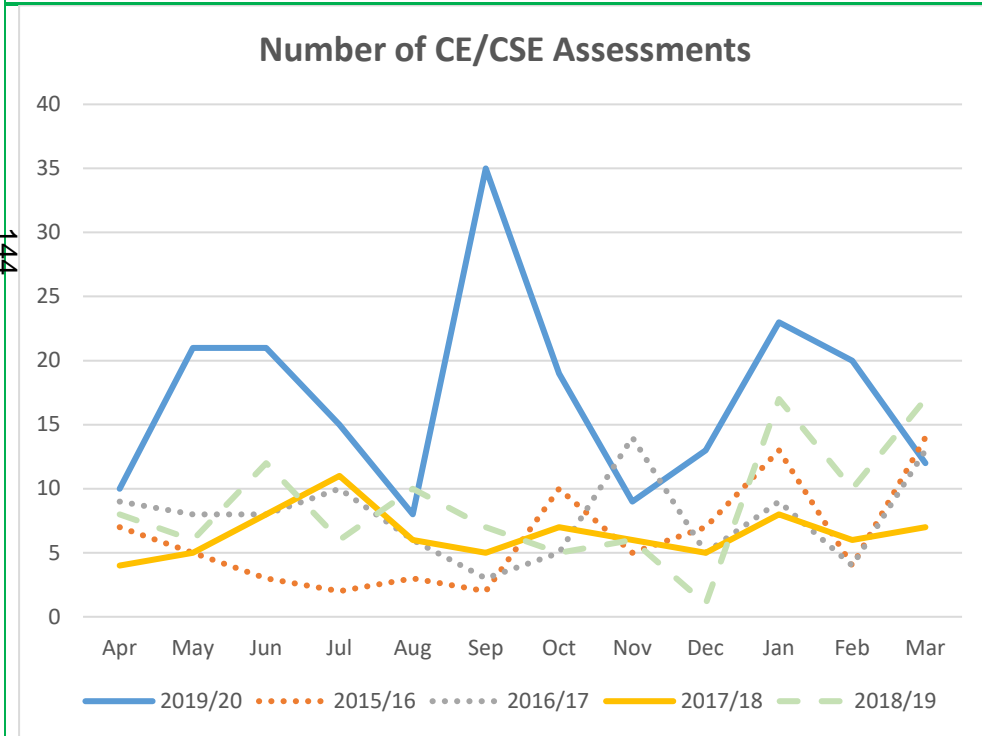
Team	Total Number awaiting completion	Number beyond 45 days
Assessment 1	49	0
Assessment 2	69	0
Assessment Team 3	17	0
CP & Court 1	2	2
CP & Court 2	6	1
CP & Court 3	4	4
CWD	8	0
Other	1	0
Total	156	7 (4%)

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

Referral Outcome	Assessment Outcome	
Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	1
	Continue with current plan	1
	Review Assessment Only	0
	Close Case	15
No-Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	1
	Strat	0
	Continue with current plan	1
	Review Assessment Only	0
	Close Case	76

Of the assessments completed in March, it was identified that 62% of cases reported seeing the child within 3 days. This an increase in the level of performance from last month, February, which was 59%.

Team	Total Number completed (March)	Percentage in timescale	Percentage seen in 3 days
Assessment 1	34	100%	47%
Assessment 2	35	77%	66%
Assessment 3	22	95%	73%
CP & Court 1	-	-	-
CP & Court 2	-	-	-
CP & Court 3	3	0%	100%
CWD	1	100%	100%
MASH	-	-	-
Total all teams	95	87%	62%



CE/CSE Assessments: During March, there were 12 CSE/CE assessments completed. The data for September 2019 – March 2020 is taken from both the old CSE step and the new CE step.

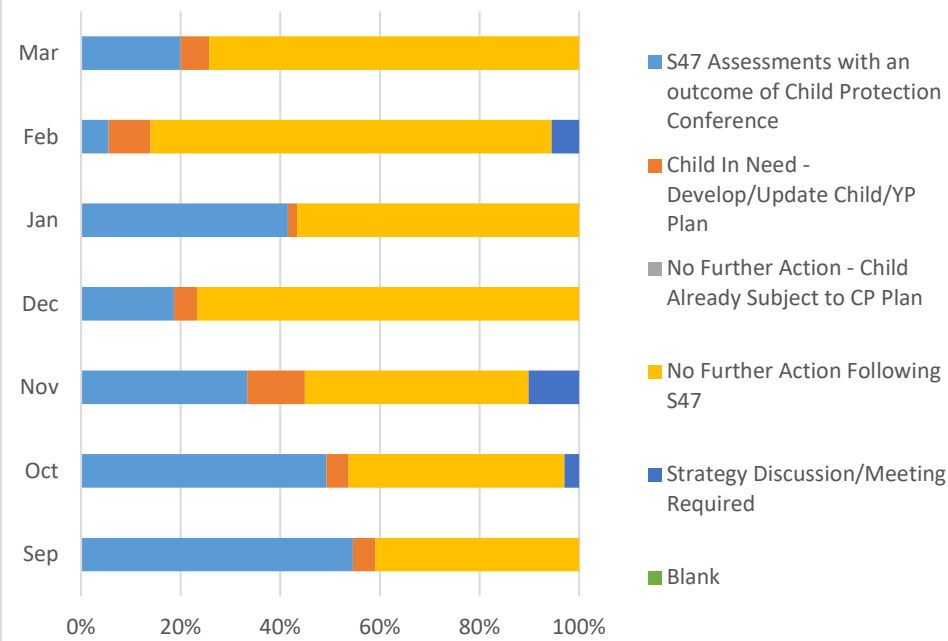
Strategy Discussions: During March, there was a small decrease in the number of Strategy Meetings undertaken. The progression of cases to Section 47 during the month also decreased slightly from February which was 63% to 62% in March.

Year to date figure is 76% progressing to Section 47.

Section 47s: There was a small decrease in the number of Section 47s completed in March, with 35 being completed.

Year to date figure is 67% of Section 47 in timescale.

Outcomes of S47s



Section 47 Outcomes:

The graph to the left shows the outcome of those Section 47s started in the period. In March, 74% of Section 47s were NFA'd. 20% were progressed to ICPC.

For the whole year to date 2019/2020, 55% have been NFA'd, 37% progressed to ICPC.

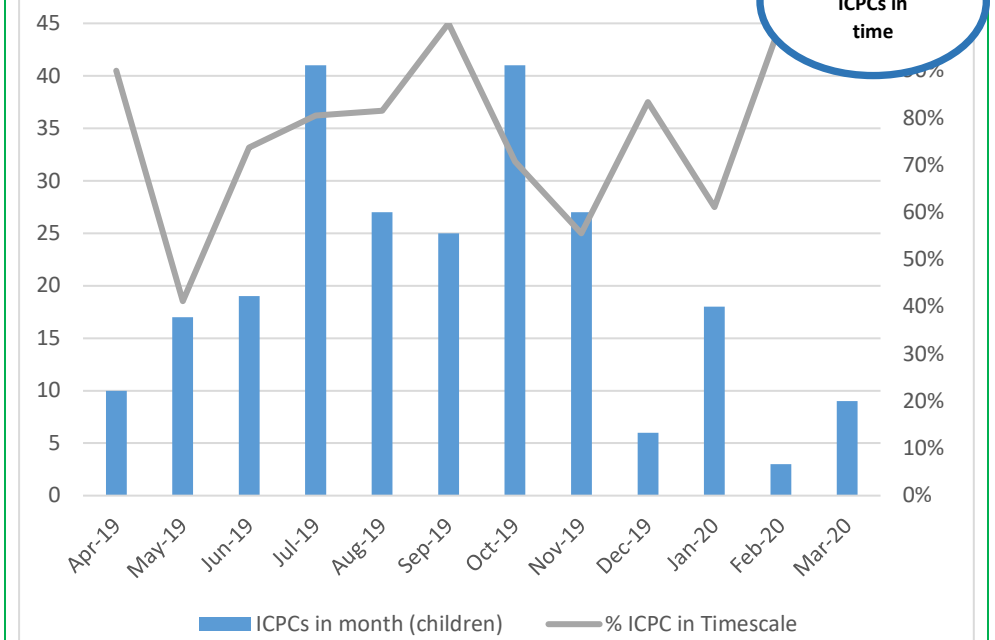
Initial Child Protection Conferences: In March, performance around ICPC timescales was 100% for the second consecutive month. All 9 ICPCs this month were held in timescale.

The year to date figure is 75% ICPC in timescale.

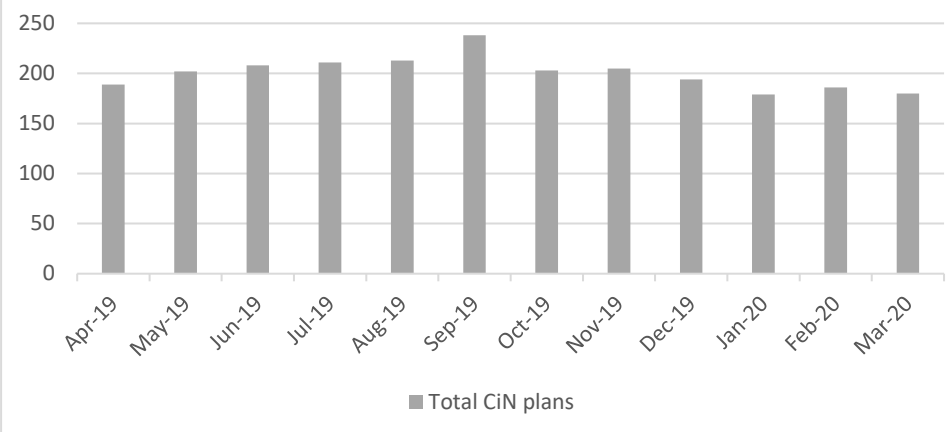
ICPCs in timescale % comparison							
Hfd March	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	Ofsted Good*	Ofsted Out'ing *
100%	75%	79%	75%	83%	79%	82%	84%

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

Number of ICPC and Timescales



Number of children on a CIN plan



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

There has been a small decrease in the numbers of children on a CIN plan during the last month from 186 in February to 180 in March.

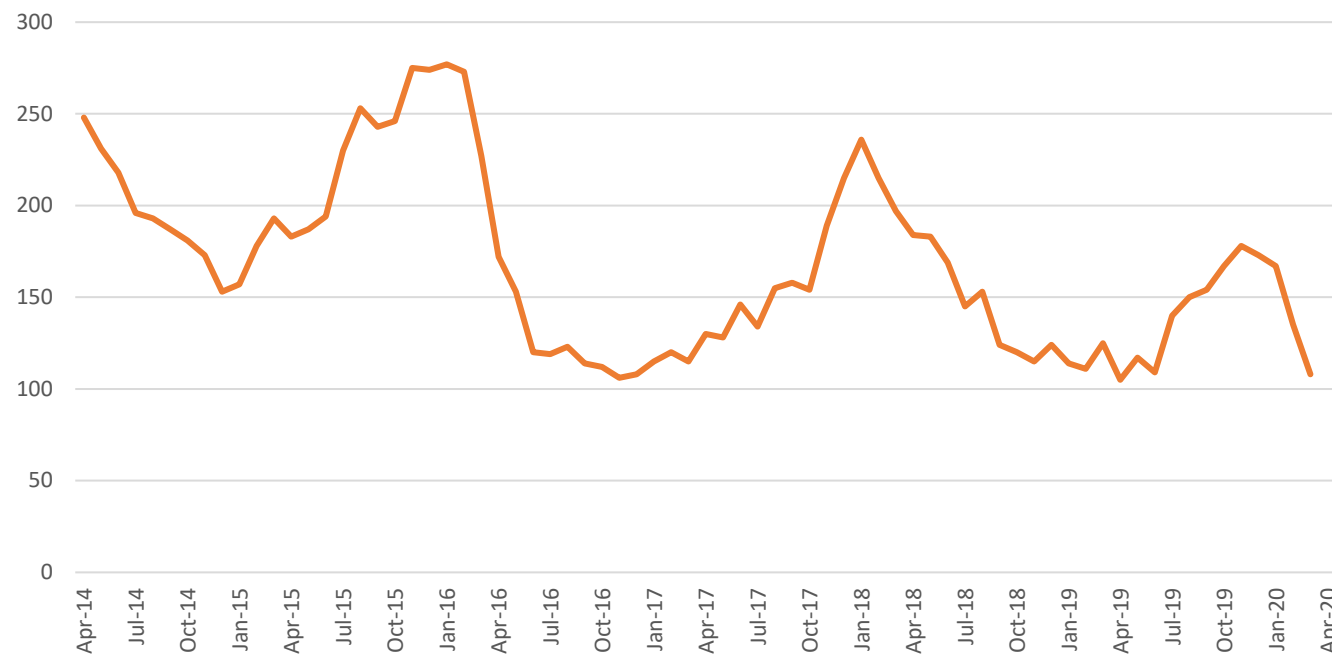
The table to the right splits the current number of children identified as CIN, between those with an incoming plan and those with an incomplete plan.

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

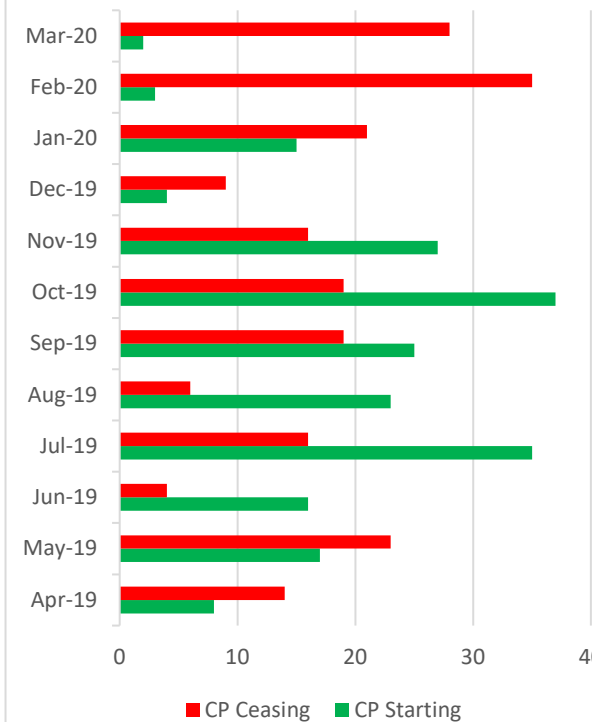
	CIN Plans		Total known CIN
	Incoming/ Proposed	Started/ Complete	
Total	48	142	180
Assessment 1	3	14	17
Assessment 2	7	19	26
Assessment Team 3	2	1	3
CP & Court 1	6	28	34
CP & Court 2	16	12	28
CP & Court 3	5	6	11
LAC Team 1	0	1	1
LAC Team 2	0	2	2
CWD	8	56	64
16+	1	3	4

Child Protection Plans

Number CPP in period



CP Starting & Ceasing in month



Current CP at Month End:

108

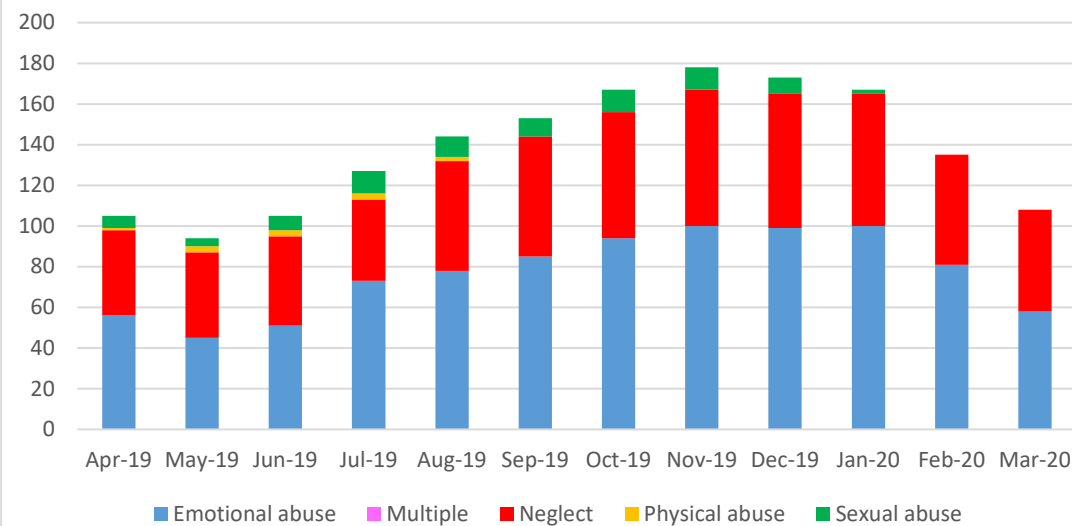
Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans: The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan during March has fallen significantly compared to the last month. 26 CP plans ceased in March due to no longer meeting thresholds and 2 became Looked After.

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*
30	44	43	47	45	45	29

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

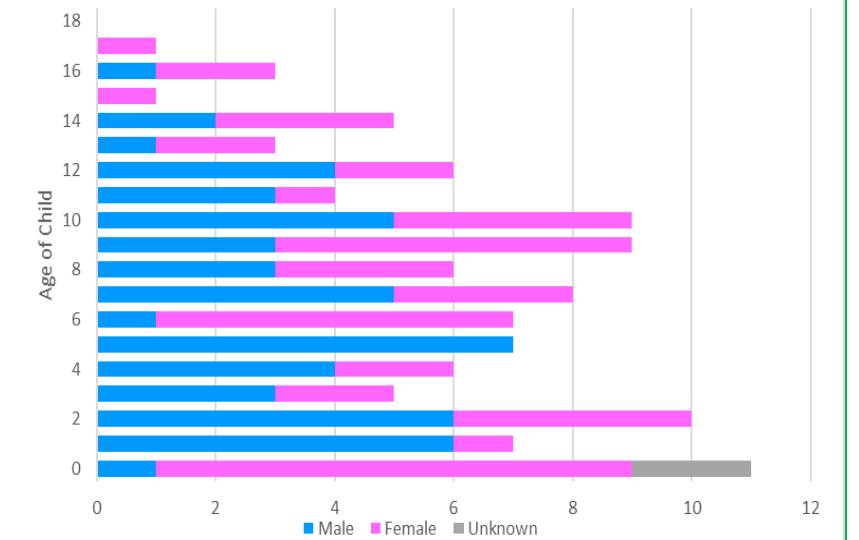
CP Plan Category



	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
Emotional	94 (56%)	100 (56%)	99 (57%)	100 (60%)	81 (60%)	58 (54%)
Neglect	62 (37%)	67 (38%)	66 (38%)	65 (39%)	54 (40%)	50 (46%)
Physical	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Sexual	11 (7%)	11 (6%)	8 (5%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0

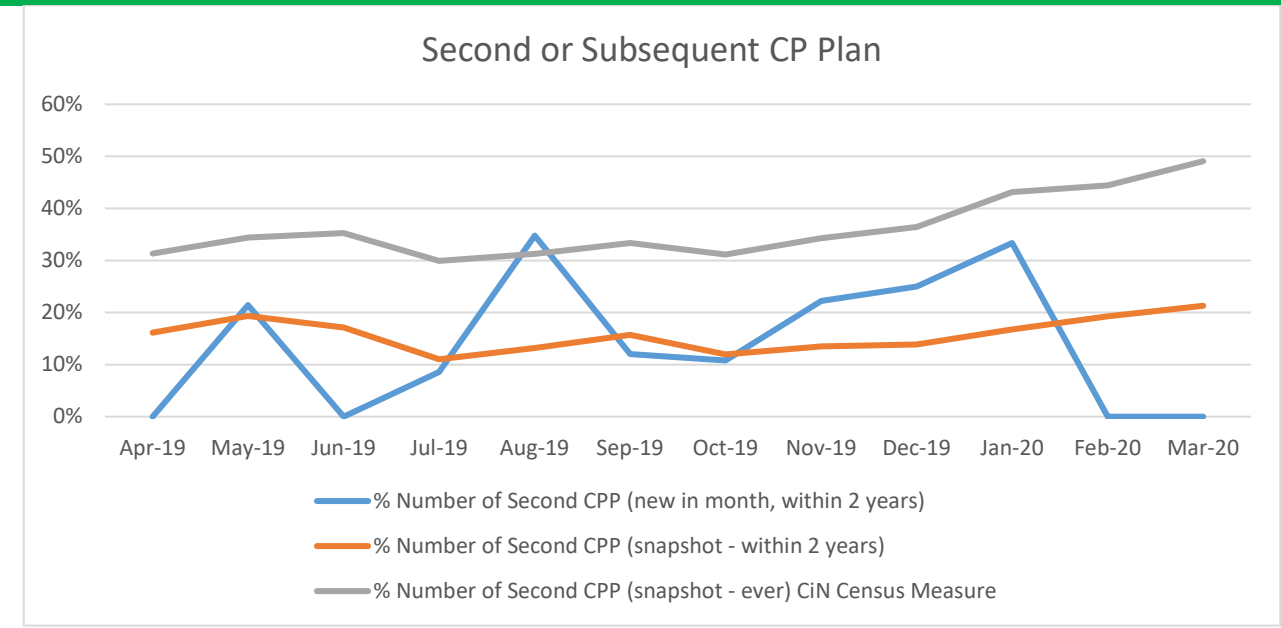
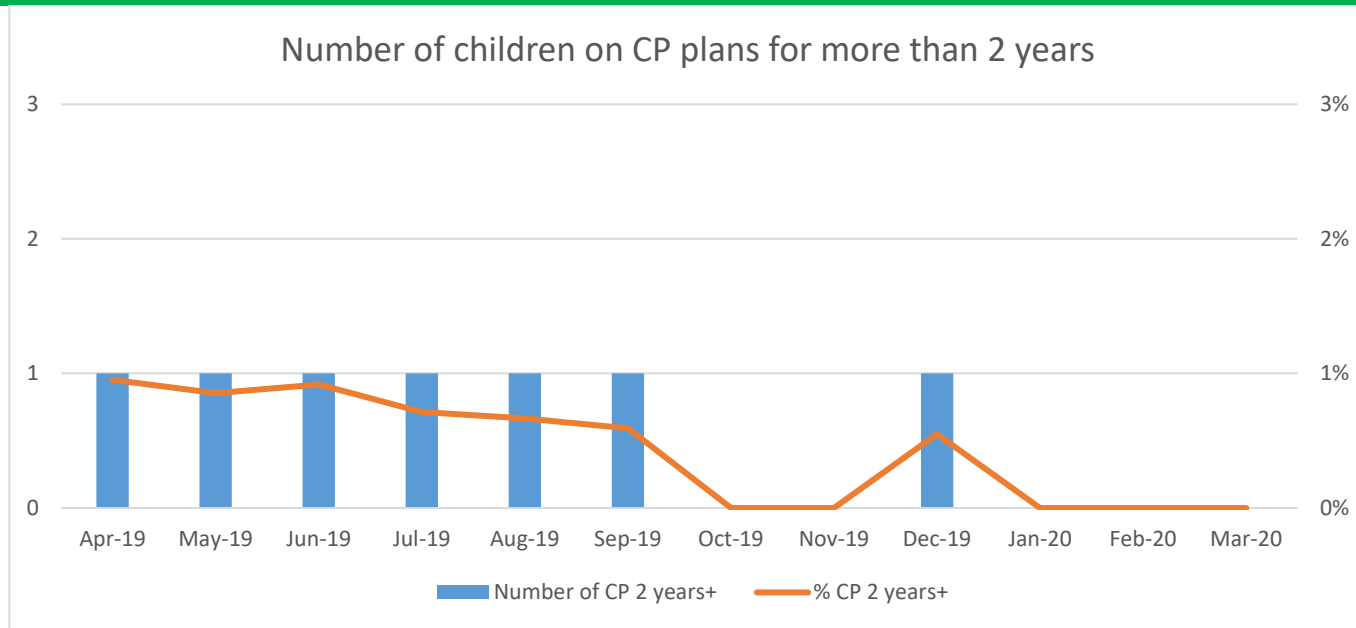
The above table gives the categories of CP plans as at the last day of the month

Age of current CP



Reason for Child Protection Plans: During March, 58 children were identified as having a plan in relation to emotional abuse, 50 for neglect, 0 for sexual abuse and 0 for physical abuse.

Child Protection Plans



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

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

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

Second and Subsequent Child Protection Plan: Of the 2 children becoming CP during March, 0 of them had been subject to a plan in the last 2 years. Of the 108 children that had a CP plan during March, 23 (21%) had been subject to a plan within 2 years of the start of their current plan (49% had been on a plan at any stage prior to the current plan)

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

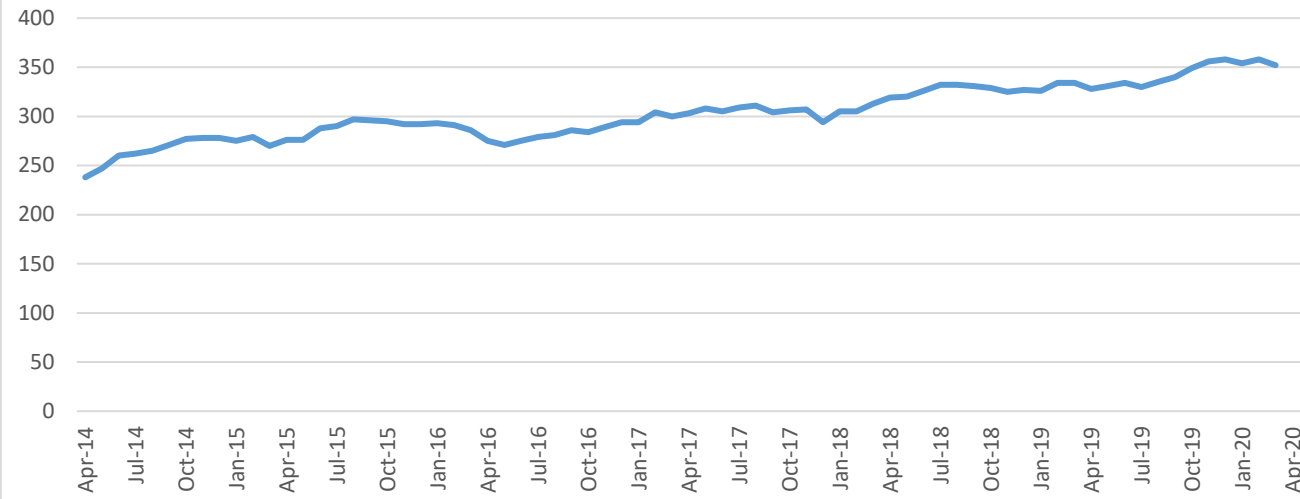
CP 2 nd and subsequent						
Hfd March	England	Stat Neigh	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
21%	-	-	11%			

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

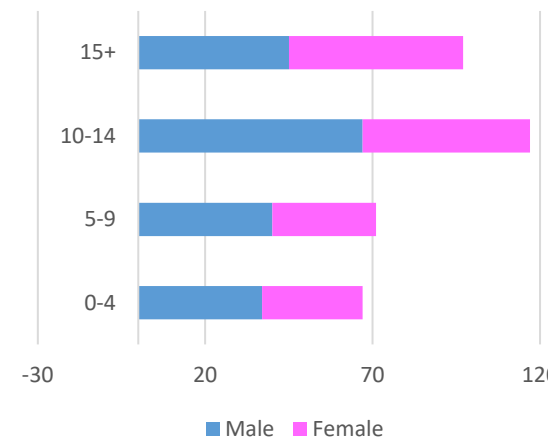
Female Genital Mutilation: In March 2020 no cases of FGM have been identified.

Looked After Children

Number of LAC



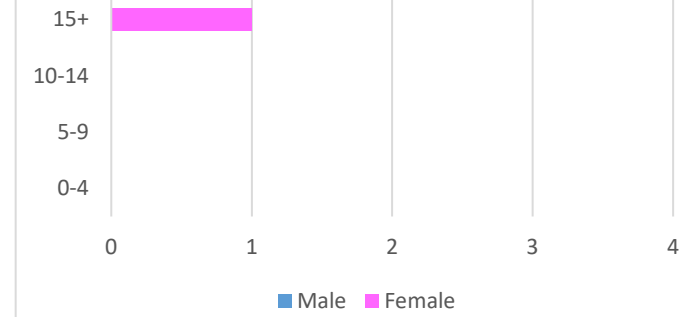
Age & Gender of LAC (at month end)



Current LAC at Month End:

352

New LAC Starters in period



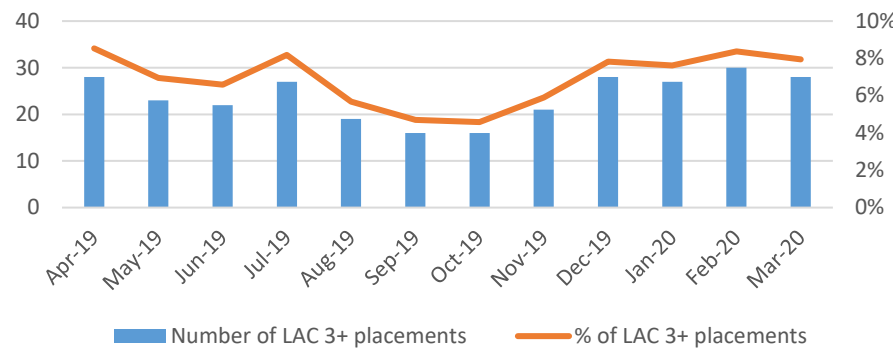
LAC Numbers: As at the end of March, the number of Looked After Children was 352.

LAC Rate (per 10,000)						
Herefordshire March	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
98	65	54	82	55	66	48

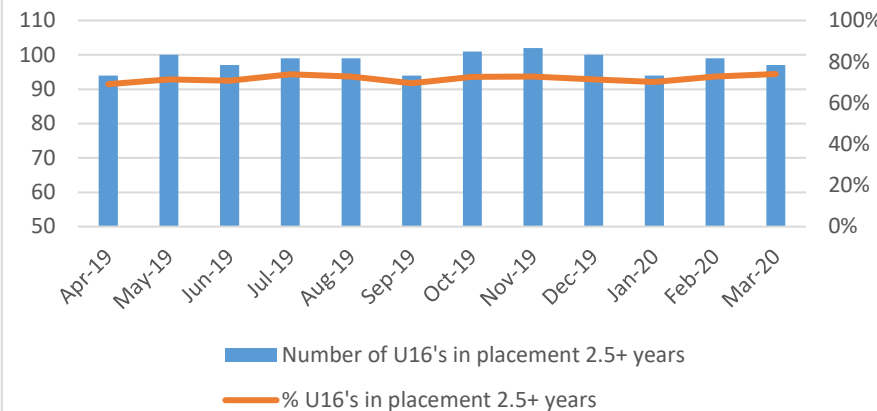
*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

New LAC in Period: During March one 15+ year old child became LAC.
LAC Cessations: Six children ceased LAC in March: Four went under an SGO arrangement, one had a child arrangement order granted and one returned home.

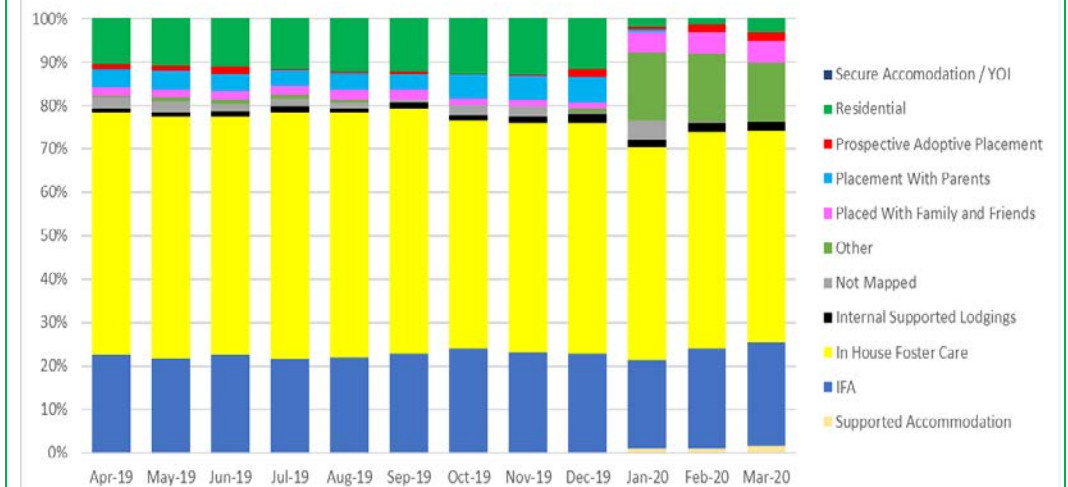
Number and percentage of LAC with 3 or more placements



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. March has stayed the same as February which was at 8%.

% 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%

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

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.

% LAC 2.5+ yrs in same placement						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
74%	69%	67%	68%	72%	69%	68%

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

Current LAC Placements: Distribution of LAC placement types had shifted a little during the last 6 months, with an increasing proportion of children placed with family and friends which was balanced by an overall reduction in in-house foster care. However, March - December shows there was a reduction in the proportion of placements with family and friends and an increase of in-house placement but the last 3 months, there has been an increase in friends and family placements.

Care Leavers

	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Cohort	31	38	33	102
LA in Touch	30 (97%)	31 (82%)	26 (77%)	87 (85%)
In Suitable Accommodation	28 (90%)	31 (82%)	26 (77%)	85 (83%)
In Education, Employment or Training	16 (52%)	16 (42%)	12 (36%)	44 (43%)

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*
85%	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*
83%	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*
43%	52%	53%	51%	57%	55%	55%

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

Fostering & Adoption

Fostering

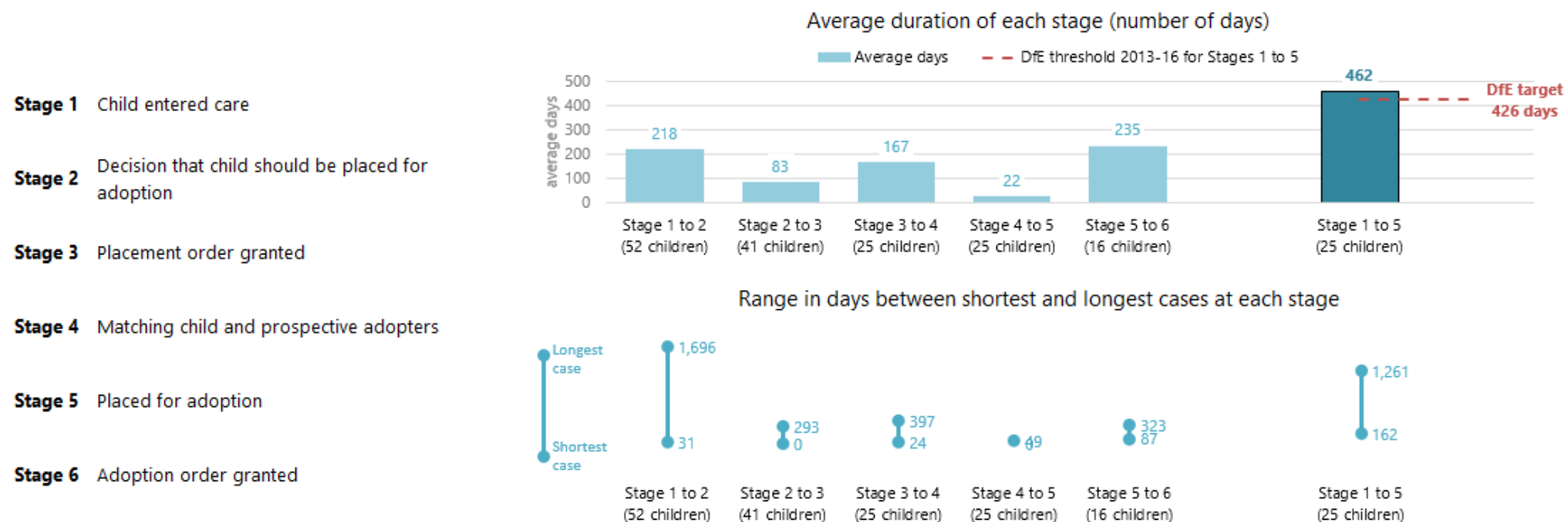
This remains an early view of the data, which needs further cleansing work.

	September 2019		October 2019		November 2019		December 2019		January 2020		February 2020		March 2020	
	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage	Nights	Percentage
In-House	5620	56%	5674	53%	5495	51%	5754	54%	5802	54%	5484	53%	5774	53%
IFA	2222	22%	2459	23%	2365	22%	2393	22%	2427	23%	2327	23%	2638	24%
Residential	1084	11%	1159	11%	1186	11%	1194	11%	1132	11%	1024	10%	1086	10%
Other	1315	12%	1481	14%	1621	14%	1642	13%	1710	12%	1607	14%	1470	13%

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. There has been next to no change in the reported average times in the graph below compared to last month.

Timeliness of each stage of the adoption process



Weekly Action Plan Metrics:

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

Case Supervisions @ 30/03/2020

Team	Within 1 Month	Within 1 - 2 Months	Within 2 - 3 Months	4 - 6 Months	More than 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	Grand Total	Within 1 Month	Within 1 - 2 Month	Within 2 - 3 Months	Within 3 Months
16+ Team	47	12	2	8	3			72	65%	17%	3%	85%
Assessment Team 1	6	4		2		5		17	35%	24%	0%	59%
Assessment Team 2	6	2	1	2		4	11	26	23%	8%	4%	35%
Assessment Team 3	3							3	100%	0%	0%	100%
Child Protection & Court Team 1	39	32	3	5				79	49%	41%	4%	94%
Child Protection & Court Team 2	25	29	18	14		6		92	27%	32%	20%	78%
Child Protection & Court Team 3	44	13	1	9	2	4	1	74	59%	18%	1%	78%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	63	14	5	6				88	72%	16%	6%	93%
Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	67	21	10	3				101	66%	21%	10%	97%
Children with Disabilities	42	38	10	8	2	1		101	42%	38%	10%	89%
Grand Total	342	165	50	57	7	20	12	653	52%	25%	8%	85%

78% of CIN cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

83% of CP cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

90% of LAC cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.

CiN/CP/LAC	Within 1 Month	Within 1 - 2 Months	Within 2 - 3 Months	4 - 6 Months	More than 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	Grand Total	Within 1 Month	Within 1 - 2 Month	Within 2 - 3 Months	Within 3 Months
CIN	72	58	18	19	2	10	11	190	38%	31%	9%	78%
CPP	49	33	10	9		9	1	111	44%	30%	9%	83%
LAC	220	74	22	29	5	1		351	63%	21%	6%	90%
LAC & CPP	1							1	100%	0%	0%	100%
Grand Total	342	165	50	57	7	20	12	653	52%	25%	8%	85%

85% of cases have a supervision within the last 3 months.

Worker Supervision

Operational Teams	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	
	February	March
	End Month	End Month
LAC2	100	100
Early Help (Nicky Turvey)	100	100
HOS (MASH, Assessment Teams)	100	100
Head of Additional Needs	100	100
MASH	100	100
LAC Support	100	100
Assessment 1	100	100
LAC1	100	100
CP/Court 1	100	100
Head of Fieldwork	100	100
Assessment Team 3	100	100
16+	93	100
Head of LAC	83	100
Assessment 2	75	100
Fostering	74	94
Principal IRO	88	89
CP/Court 3	86	88
CWD	92	67
CP/Court 2	71	67
Head of S&R	0	60
Early Permanence	0	50
Assessment Family Support	from March 20	25
Social Care Family Support	0	0
Principal Social Worker	0	0

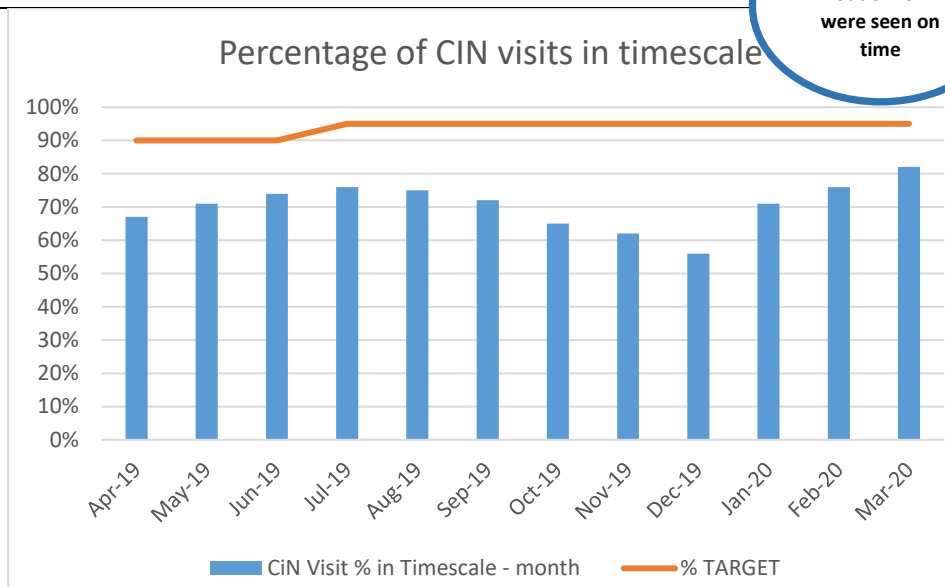
End of March 2020

Service Area	Feb-20	Mar-20	Trend	Monthly Total Trend
All Teams	82%	84%	↑	
Operational Teams total	77%	80%	↑	
Business Support total	100%	100%	-	

Business Support Teams	% completed in month (target 90%+) (10% below target is Amber)	
	February	March
	End Month	End Month
Head of Business Support	100	100
Placements	100	100
Business Support Team Leaders	100	100
Business Support 1	100	100

CP, LAC, and CIN Visits

112 children out of 137 were seen on time



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

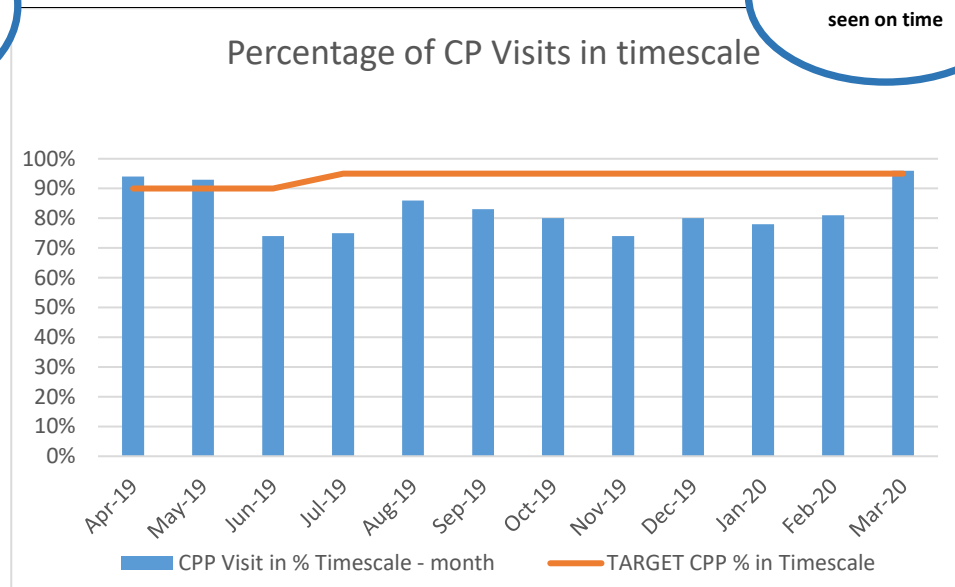
At the end of March 82% of CIN Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 70% and is below 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated CIN Cases	% in timescale
Assessment 1	10	80%
Assessment 2	12	100%
CP Court 1	27	100%
CP Court 2	16	94%
CP Court 3	7	86%
CWD	59	66%
LAC Team 2	2	100%
16 +	4	75%
TOTAL	137	82%

*This data has come from 30th March 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.

106 children out of 111 were seen on time



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

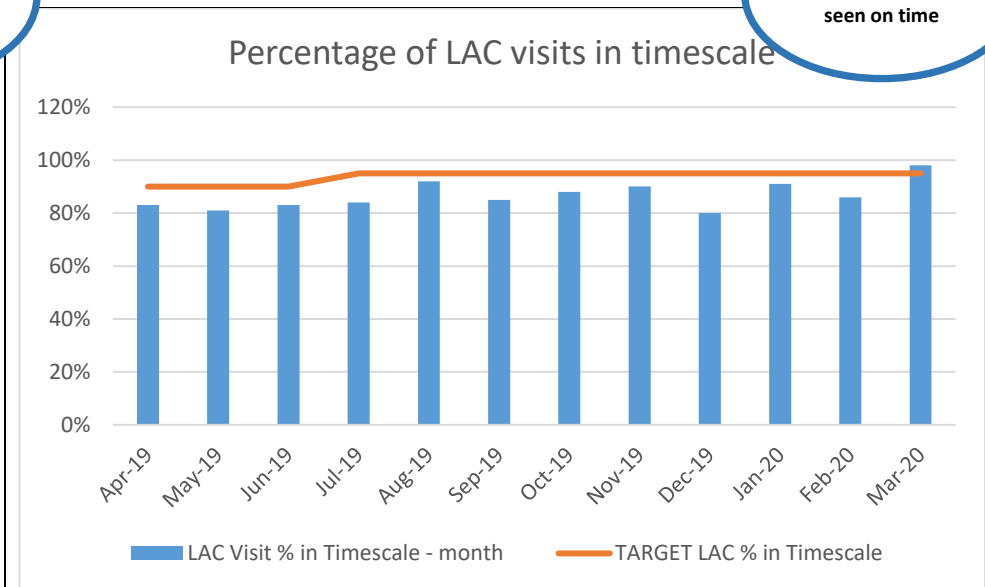
At the end of March, 96% of CP Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 82% and is below 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated CP Cases	% in timescale
CP Court 1	28	100%
CP Court 2	48	96%
CP Court 3	32	91%
LAC 2	1	100%
16 +	2	100%
TOTAL	111	96%

*This data has come from 30th March 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.

344 children out of 352 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 March, 98% of LAC Visits were completed in timescale. Year to date is 87% and is below 95% target.

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

Team	Allocated LAC Cases	% in timescale
CP Court 1	17	100%
CP Court 2	16	94%
CP Court 3	30	100%
LAC 1	87	100%
LAC 2	98	99%
16 +	67	97%
CWD	36	89%
TOTAL	352	98%

*This data has come from 30th March 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

30/03/2020	Team	Number of All Workers Holding Cases in Team	Team Workers as per Establishment (FTE) (Only Caseholders) (includes SW MP and Senior	Number of Cases by team	Average Caseload per team based on workers holding cases	Average Caseload Per Team - based on all FTE of the team	Number of SV Worker Role Holding Cases in Team	Number of SV Worker Role holding more than 20 Cases (or pro	Percentage of qualified social workers holding more than 20 cases (SW on zero caseload not included in	Maximim cases held by qualified social worker (workers with 0 caseload are not
153 Click on team to go to page	16+ Team Allocated worker	3	7	77	3	11	7	0	0%	18
	16+ Team PA	8	8	143	13	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	16+ Virtual Worker	n/a	n/a	38	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Assessment Team 1	6	6.9	78	13	11	6	1	17%	19
	Assessment Team 2	4	7	66	17	3	4	0	0%	20
	Assessment Team 3	2	7	20	10	tbc	2	0	0%	15
	Child Protection & Court Team 1	5	7	82	16	12	5	1	20%	21
	Child Protection & Court Team 2	9	8	100	11	13	7	1	14%	21
	Child Protection & Court Team 3	7	8	87	12	11	6	0	0%	20
	Children With Disabilities (CSW only)	7	6.1	111	16	16	6	3	50%	23
	Children and Young People's LAC Team 1	8	7	90	11	11	6	1	17%	21
	Children and Young People's LAC Team 2	6	6	101	17	17	4	0	0%	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 March:

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

*A part time social worker is holding 14 cases when the maximum FTE is 12 cases. This account for the 1 worker holding more than 20 cases (even though no workers are holding 20 cases or more).



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Tuesday 2 June 2020
Title of report:	Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group - Outcomes and Recommendations
Report by:	Chairperson of the Task and Finish Group

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To report the outcomes and recommendations of the Child Exploitation task and finish group to the children and young people scrutiny committee. The committee will be asked to consider and approve the outcomes from the task and finish group and decide if the recommendations should be reported to the cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The committee considers the report and recommendations of the task and finish group: Child Exploitation (at appendix 1 of this report) and determines whether to agree the findings for submission to the executive.**

Alternative options

1. The recommendations proposed in this report represent the outcomes of the Child Exploitation task and finish group. If there are any additional recommendations which the committee feels should be included these can be proposed and voted upon at the meeting.

Key considerations

2. The establishment of a task and finish group to focus on Child Exploitation in Herefordshire was agreed by the children and young people scrutiny committee on 15 July 2019. The task and finish group was established to assess the scale of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire and examine the response of relevant agencies and organisations.
3. The group was formed of six members of the Council and a co-optee from the Children's Society. The group undertook three meetings between November – December 2019. At the initial meeting the group learned about the different forms of Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and latest data and statistics. The group also learned about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance relating to Child Exploitation. The second meeting of the group consisted of a witness session at which the group engaged stakeholders, partners and relevant agencies and learned of current projects to address Child Exploitation in Herefordshire. At the final meeting of the group recommendations were discussed and proposed.
4. The recommendations are contained in the final report of the task and finish group contained in appendix 1 and are proposed to the children and young people committee to consider approving for submission to the cabinet.

Community impact

5. 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.
6. The recommendations made by the Child Exploitation task and finish group contribute to priorities in the corporate plan to ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve.

Equality duty

7. 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.
- 8. If the committee agrees with the findings of the Child Exploitation task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the executive and, depending on their decision, due regard will need to be given to the public sector equality duty. The findings of the Child Exploitation task and finish group are intended to support and improve safeguarding arrangements for children. This demonstrates the council's commitment to its duty and the recommendations, if adopted, will improve safeguarding services thereby demonstrating that the council is being proactive in fulfilling its Equality duty.

Resource implications

- 9. This report proposes recommendations to the executive concerning Child Exploitation safeguarding services in Herefordshire. The final recommendations agreed by the children and young people scrutiny committee will be sent to the executive. In considering their response to the approved recommendations, a full assessment of resource implications will be undertaken.

Legal implications

- 10. The functions of the children and young people scrutiny committee include the powers to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive; and to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

Risk management

- 11. There are no risks associated with the recommendations and in considering its response the executive will need to assess the risks arising from the scrutiny committee's recommendations.

Consultees

- 12. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Child Exploitation task and finish group report

Background papers

None identified



Task and Finish Group Report

**Child Exploitation Task and Finish
Group**

April 2020

**Task and finish group concerning Child
Exploitation**

Chairperson's Foreword

I am very pleased to present this report to the Children and Young People's scrutiny committee, as requested at our meeting on 15 July 2019.

Keeping children in Herefordshire safe is at the heart of Herefordshire Council's responsibilities, and there are few issues local people care about more deeply than the wellbeing of our young people. More than simply an internal or procedural piece of work, our task was undertaken in the spirit of serving our local community.

The Task and Finish group met on three occasions, and the process was interesting and enlightening for all of us, despite Child Exploitation being such a distressing subject.

I am extremely grateful to the witnesses from our local partners, who gave up their time to prepare and present to us what Child Exploitation is, how it works, how it's being tackled, how the various agencies work together, and what more could and should be done. Their outspokenness was very helpful. Thanks in particular to West Mercia Police and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre.

The contributions from Lucy Belcher from the Children's Society, who supported the work of the group by contributing questions and suggesting recommendations, were also extremely useful.

The evidence, explanations and patience from our own officers with specialist knowledge and experience in this area were invaluable.

I am very grateful to my fellow Task and Finish group members, Cllr Paul Andrews, Cllr Jennie Hewitt, Cllr Peter Jinman, Cllr Mike Jones and Cllr David Summers. I appreciate their commitment to understanding the issues, and to collaborative group work, as well as their determination to produce constructive and meaningful recommendations.

Finally, I would like to thank Matt Evans for his care and sensitivity in organising meetings and witness sessions, and drawing up minutes and recommendations. I appreciate how he transformed the presentations, and the group's many wide-ranging discussions, into this report.

This report isn't a ticked box; it is part of an ongoing process to assure, and ensure, that we are doing all we can for our young people. I trust it will be a useful contribution to the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Diana Toynbee, April 2020
Chairperson of the Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group

1 Executive Summary

1.1 At its meeting on 15 July 2019 the children and young people scrutiny committee requested the convening of a task and finish group concerning Child Exploitation as part of the setting of its work programme priorities. The committee agreed that the review would cover the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). The topic was identified by the scrutiny committee as a priority over concerns regarding county lines activity, as a form of child criminal exploitation, in the West Midlands. Furthermore it is felt to be a critical element of the work of the scrutiny committee to scrutinise data relating to child sexual exploitation and examine initiatives and projects to address its incidence in Herefordshire.

1.2 The task and finish group undertook three meetings. The first meeting was focused on providing a background on child exploitation in Herefordshire. The second meeting was a witness session which involved the engagement of stakeholders, partner organisations and relevant agencies. The witness session consisted of a series of presentations followed by questioning of witnesses by the task and finish group. The group met for a third and final time to resolve its recommendations to the scrutiny committee.

1.3 The group learnt at its first meeting that Child Exploitation was defined as occurring:

“...where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal / sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.”

1.4 The task and finish group developed an understanding of the scale of Child Exploitation and the risk posed. An assessment from the representative of the Children's Society explained that the issue had received significant coverage in recent years, and awareness raising from media coverage may inform a perception that the level of Child Exploitation was increasing. This perception may be reinforced by the increase in reporting and detection arising from greater awareness. The trend around increased reporting was welcomed by the group and was seen as vital, given the significant challenge posed by under-reporting and identification. The group was also informed that an increase in Child Exploitation could be attributed, in some circumstances, to reductions in youth services and other forms of support for young people which could create a vulnerability for some sectors of young people in society.

1.5 With respect to child criminal exploitation the group was provided with details of the issue of county lines, which was recognised as a current, significant threat to children's safeguarding (and potential exploitation). The group was informed that both urban and rural areas were affected by county lines and different models of operation existed across the country. Due to the changing nature and understanding of the issue of county lines the assumption that those young people most likely to be exploited were deprived and from an urban background was changing, and it was now recognised that any young person could be subject to exploitation. The risk posed by criminal exploitation of children and county lines requires a contextualised safeguarding response, a broader approach to established safeguarding arrangements focusing on the family.

1.6 The group understood concerns that attention on county lines and child criminal exploitation should not detract nor diminish a focus on the problems of child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation was distinct from criminal exploitation as it was most likely to occur within the family and required a different safeguarding response on the part of the council and partner agencies. The group understood that there were concerns that the widespread reporting of county lines had led to child sexual exploitation receiving less weighting in local strategies and polices. Whilst acknowledging the distinctions between child criminal and sexual exploitation the group was keen to examine Child Exploitation as a

whole, to understand the safeguarding response and the efforts of all partner agencies to the challenge it posed.

1.7 The purpose of the review conducted by the task and finish was to understand the challenge posed by Child Exploitation in Herefordshire and assess arrangements that were in place to address the risk. The group heard case studies and understood the impact on individual victims of exploitation was profound, causing significant harm. Using the current data modelling the risk of exploitation examined by the group suggested that a relatively small proportion of children in Herefordshire were at risk and that the scale of the issue in Herefordshire may not be as substantial as in other areas of the West Midlands or the country as a whole. This could be a consequence of the rurality of the county and small population but it should not minimise the fact that exploitation exists in the county and its impact on those affected is pernicious.

1.8 The group received detail of the work being undertaken locally to address exploitation and heard from relevant organisations and agencies at its witness session. It has been assured that strategies and policies are in place and work is ongoing in the county across different agencies and organisations to combat exploitation. The group developed an understanding of the complexity of the network of organisations addressing exploitation and the difficulty in distinguishing the functions and responsibilities of all agencies involved.

1.9 Following the presentations, discussions and questioning of witnesses the group produced recommendations on the following topics:

1. Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation
2. The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need
3. Data sharing
4. Mapping of current services and organisations
5. Promotion of training and raising awareness
6. Signposting and reporting tools
7. Annual Child Exploitation summit
8. Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people
9. Licensing and safeguarding training
10. Children not in school

2. Composition of the Spotlight Review

2.1 Members of the task and finish group were:

Councillor Diana Toynbee (Chairperson)
Councillor Paul Andrews
Councillor Jennie Hewitt
Councillor Peter Jinman
Councillor Mike Jones
Councillor David Summers

2.2 The group also included a co-optee from The Children's Society, Lucy Belcher. Ms Belcher attended the witness session and participated remotely in meetings 1 and 3, providing feedback, questions and proposed recommendations via email.

2.3 Lead directorate officers – Chris Baird (Director Children and Families), Liz Elgar (Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support) and Cath Thomas (Head of Service Safeguarding and review).

3 Context

Why did we set up the task and finish group?

3.1 The task and finish group was convened to:

- Receive data on the incidence of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire.
- Learn from relevant agencies of projects and initiatives to address Child Exploitation.
- Assess partnership and joint working between agencies.
- Consider the introduction of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and examine its effectiveness.

What were we looking at?

3.2 The focus of the review was to:

- Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation, the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data from other areas.
- Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation.
- Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance relating to Child Exploitation including the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit
- Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures.
- Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures.
- Develop an understanding of the joint working between agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working.
- To consider how the latest guidance from central government, *the child exploitation disruption toolkit*, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness.
- To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

3.3 Through the review the task and finish group sought to establish:

- An understanding of the current statistics and data in respect of Child Exploitation;
- Assurance that partnership working between local agencies is effective and there are no gaps in the provision of services;
- Assurance that projects and initiatives are in place at local agencies to address Child Exploitation and they are effective; and
- Assurance that the latest guidance from Government is being applied and is effective in combatting Child Exploitation.

Who did we speak to?

3.4 Between November 2019 – December 2019, the group convened three meetings and engaged the following officers and witnesses:

Organisation	Officer/Witness
West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre	– Helen Stanbra, Counselling Services Manager – Sarah Melia

	– Laura Kuegler
Children’s Charities	– Lucy Belcher, Service Manager – North, Prevention Programme, The Children’s Society
Children and Families, Herefordshire Council	– Chris Baird, Director Children and Families – Liz Elgar, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support Children and Families – Cath Thomas, Head of Service Safeguarding and Review – Gill Cox, Head of Looked After Children – Sue Rogers, Head of MASH and Assessment – Ruby Matthews, CSE Coordinator
Public Health	– Karen Wright, Director of Public Health – Lindsay MacHardy, Public Health Specialist
West Mercia Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)	– Vicki Ridgewell, Exploitation and Vulnerability Coordinator – Karen Perry, Exploitation and Vulnerability Coordinator
Vennture	– Robert Thomas
West Mercia Youth Offending Service	– Keith Barham, Head of Service West Mercia Youth Justice Service – Marie Turner, Local Team Manager, West Mercia Youth Justice Service
West Mercia Police	– DCI Jon Roberts, Herefordshire Local Policing Area
Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	– Sarah Dempsey, Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding

What did we ask?

3.5 The group focused on the following questions:

- What is Child Sexual Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;
- What is Child Criminal Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;
- Which local organisations and agencies have a role to play in combatting Child Exploitation and how do they work in partnership;
- What local projects/initiatives are in place;
- What preventative work is being undertaken to combat Child Exploitation;
- How are agencies working with other local areas to understand patterns/trends and work on preventative measures;
- How are local agencies seeking to implement the latest government guidance; and
- Is the government’s latest guidance an effective tool to combat Child Exploitation?

3.6 From our research and talking to officers and witnesses did we fulfil the aims of the task and finish group contained in the terms of reference?

To assess the outcomes of the task and finish group it was agreed that the final report would examine whether the task and finish group had achieved the objectives contained in its terms of reference. An assessment against the objectives is provided below:

- i) Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data

- ii) Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire.

Outcome – At the initial meeting of the group on 8 November 2019 a presentation was provided by the officers in the children and children and families’ directorate and a representative of West Mercia Police. The presentation contained a definition of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation and statistics of the risk of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire.

- iii) Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance relating to Child Exploitation including the child exploitation disruption toolkit

Outcome – At the meeting on 8 November 2019 detail of the responsibilities of different agencies was outlined, along with guidance from the Home Office and Department for Education. The responsibilities of separate agencies was also covered at the witness session on 2 December 2019 where the wide range of different organisations with a role in addressing Child Exploitation and the complexity of their interrelationship was evident. At the initial meeting of the group the introduction of the child disruption toolkit was listed as a challenge but there was no mention of its implementation at the witness session.

- iv) Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness.
- v) Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness.

Outcome – At its first meeting and through the witness session local agencies and organisations presented to the group their projects and initiatives. Performance measures were not included.

- vi) Develop an understanding of the joint working between local agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working.

Outcome – Through the witness session the group developed an understanding of the coordinated work undertaken by agencies and organisations with responsibilities to address Child Exploitation.

- vii) To consider how the latest guidance from central government, *the child exploitation disruption toolkit*, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness.

Outcome – The implementation of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit published by the Home Office was presented as a challenge but there was no detail at the witness session as to how local agencies and organisations were seeking to introduce measures contained in the toolkit. This could be the focus of a future witness session (see recommendation 7 below) with partner agencies and organisations asked if they used the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and whether they had found it easy to implement.

- viii) To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

Outcome – The final meeting of the group considered recommendations which are provided below.

4. Summary of our findings

1. Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation
2. The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need
3. Data sharing
4. Mapping of current services and organisations
5. Promotion of training and raising awareness
6. Signposting and reporting tools
7. Annual Child Exploitation summit
8. Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people
9. Licensing and safeguarding training
10. Children not in school

4.1 Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation

The group learned that the serious case review (SCR) 'Katie' in January 2019 was the first SCR concerning CSE in Herefordshire. The SCR had looked at processes and mechanisms in place at local agencies and organisations to respond to cases of CSE and recommended learning points for all agencies.

Since the Katie SCR a significant amount of work has been taking place in Herefordshire to respond to the risk of Child Exploitation. Nationally there has also been a focus on understanding the risk posed to children and young people of criminal and sexual exploitation. The work undertaken in Herefordshire has included the following:

- Following the Katie SCR a review was carried out, in February 2019, of existing case files to assess if there were other children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation.
- A new exploitation risk assessment tool has been established which has removed the distinction between CSE and CCE to span all exploitation.
- In Herefordshire a contextual safeguarding approach has been adopted following the review in February 2019. The approach provides a theoretical basis to children's safeguarding and recognises that the risks posed by the criminal and sexual exploitation of children tend to be present beyond the family environment.
- Complex strategy meetings have been established which involve a number of agencies working with children and adults. The complex strategy meetings utilise the contextual safeguarding approach, identifying links between victims, perpetrators and locations and addressing contextual risks.
- A people and places tracker is in use, which focuses on individuals and the disruption of exploitation activity. The tracker incorporates information relating to people who are at risk or potentially risky places.
- A prevent and disrupt operational group including housing enforcement, police intelligence, licensing, trading standards and standard safeguarding agencies operates using information from the people and places tracker to target individuals at risk and areas where exploitation is occurring.
- A child criminal and child sexual exploitation strategy delivery plan is in place together with a delivery group involving West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council.
- Tackling Child Exploitation programme – Herefordshire Council submitted a successful bid to the Children's Society, together with West Mercia Police and the clinical commissioning group to look at support to examine how the Child Exploitation service is delivered in Herefordshire.

The group recognised the significant work that had been undertaken to understand the issue of Child Exploitation locally and establish structures and processes to respond to the challenge. The group felt that this work should be highlighted to the local community together with an assessment of the current level of risk in Herefordshire.

It is important that awareness is raised around Child Exploitation issues and that information is disseminated to the public to explain how to assist local agencies by reporting concerns. The group supports the undertaking of a coordinated publicity campaign between children's services and Public Health to promote the reporting of issues and concerns to assist Child Exploitation disruption and prevention work.

4.2 The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need

The group received details of the work undertaken to understand the level of risk posed by Child Exploitation to children and young people in Herefordshire and to develop a risk profile. It learned that since the SCR an exploitation risk assessment tool has been introduced which identifies children and young people at moderate or significant risk from Child Exploitation. The statistics presented to the group indicated that as of October 2019 55 children and young people in the county were at moderate or significant risk.

The group understood that the current profile related to young people receiving a statutory service at level 4 of the safeguarding/levels of need thresholds established by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB). The use of level 4 only to compile statistics of the risk of Child Exploitation to children and young people in the county was queried. It was questioned what effect the inclusion of children identified at levels 2 and 3 would have upon the data and whether this would increase the numbers of children and young people recorded as being at risk of Child Exploitation. The group were informed that work was being undertaken to enable figures of young people at level 3 to be used to establish a fuller assessment of risk to young people across the county.

The group supported this work and recommended that the executive 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. The group also recommended that work was undertaken to potentially include those children presenting at the level 2 level of need threshold in the exploitation risk assessment tool.

4.3 Data sharing

During the meetings of the group the issue of data sharing, between agencies and organisations with responsibility for addressing Child Exploitation, was raised and conflicting evidence was heard about the ease of sharing data. The group heard about work the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had undertaken which relied on the submission of data from local bodies including the council, the police and the clinical commissioning group. The police had submitted the required data but the piece of work had been impeded by the council nor the CCG providing the required data due to data protection concerns. In other evidence provided at the witness session it was commented by Herefordshire council that there were no known problems with the sharing of data.

The group were keen that where there are impediments to the sharing of data between agencies and organisations, these must be understood and action undertaken to resolve problems identified. This is particularly important if the CSP is to develop successfully a combined data set between agencies holding data to enable the identification of children at risk of exploitation. It was recommended that the executive work with partner agencies, in

particular the Police, to examine the potential impediments to the sharing of data and to propose solutions.

4.4 Mapping of current services and organisations

At the witness session the group gained an understanding of the range of different groups and bodies with responsibilities to address Child Exploitation. The range of organisations and agencies was complex and it was felt that even organisations tackling Child Exploitation may not understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies and groups. It was likely that there would also be confusion on the part of the public around the network of organisations and their responsibilities.

It is important that work is undertaken to understand: the interactions between the organisations; where overlap existed; and where the best monies are being spent (cost benefit). It was noted that there were a number of strategic and operational groups, and acknowledged that at a strategic level there was some overlap in responsibilities and functions. The group heard that there was the opportunity to look at duplication collectively across organisations; due to the nature of Herefordshire as a small local authority the same individuals tended to attend different groups, which is an advantage when identifying duplication and making changes to existing structures.

To enhance the understanding of all organisations involved in efforts to address Child Exploitation and the public it is important that a mapping exercise of all current services is undertaken. This exercise should detail all those organisations locally that play a role in addressing Child Exploitation and list their responsibilities. It will highlight the duplication and gaps in the provision of services to address Child Exploitation and review the existing structure of organisations and agencies. Following completion of the mapping exercise the outcome should be communicated effectively with all those organisations identified, and the public.

4.5 Promotion of training and raising awareness

During the course of the witness session the group were shown a variety of training and awareness raising presentations that focused on Child Exploitation and in particular how these could be delivered in schools.

The role of dedicated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in schools was outlined to the group and it was explained DSLs helped ensure that schools were briefed and were aware of guidance and best practice. An educational safeguarding conference for schools took place on 13 November 2019 which involved exploitation coordinators from the council and other local groups, including West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRASC). WMRASC described its work in schools including: the SELFIE project, offering workshops to schools around sexual violence support and prevention; and the Branch project which works on a one-to-one basis with young people at risk of or the victim of child sexual exploitation. The council played a role with schools to highlight the options for training and development.

The group was interested in the work undertaken by the Children's Society and learned of national programmes including the tackling exploitation programme and the prevention programme. The Children's Society has a prevention officer who works across the West Midlands to raise awareness in different local agencies and share good practice around policies and processes.

The work of the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators, as funded by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was presented to the group. The coordinators had initially been funded up to 2021 and were involved in raising the awareness

of vulnerability and exploitation and working with local agencies to understand the provisions in place. Over 150 volunteers had received the training and the intention was to roll-out the training to door staff, retail security and a number of businesses in Hereford city centre to encourage the reporting of actionable intelligence to the police.

The presentation by the trainers from the OPCC at the witness session was highly regarded and it was felt that the training session provided by the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators would provide a valuable tool to schools or groups of schools to improve understanding of Child Exploitation and assist in the identification of the signs of exploitation. It was agreed that the training should be actively promoted to schools and also to members of the Council.

The group queried the level of work that had been undertaken with parish and town councils and the Herefordshire Association of Location Councils (HALC) to disseminate information about the identification of Child Exploitation and methods of reporting. Parish and town councils were gaining in importance through undertaking greater delivery of local services, and many could be in position to circulate information locally and be the 'eyes and ears' of the community. It was confirmed to the group that work with parish councils was planned, and, as a trial, a member of the exploitation team would attend a parish council meeting to provide a presentation. The group felt that town and parish councils should be provided with a briefing or update on Child exploitation and county lines; in particular at a forthcoming parish summit.

4.6 Signposting and reporting tools

The group learned of the Tell Someone website, an initiative undertaken between West Mercia Police, West Mercia Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the children safeguarding boards of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire. The website was considered an effective tool to allow families, young people, professionals and the public to report concerns regarding the sexual exploitation of children. A Tell Someone app was in development to utilise the branding of the website and which young people or anyone with concerns could download to their phones. It was explained to the group that this initiative was at an early stage and further investment was required. The group was very supportive of the proposal as a method to signpost people and offer a user friendly and easy-to-use reporting tool.

It was essential that the council ensured that signposting of information about Child Exploitation is clear and reporting methods are easy for children and adults to use. It was recommended that the executive undertake a review of the signposting currently in place to identify easily implemented improvements across agencies and work with the organisations involved in the development of the new Tell Someone app to expedite its introduction.

4.7 Annual Child Exploitation Summit

The group felt that the witness session had been a helpful approach to understand the range of organisations and programmes involved in efforts to address Child Exploitation. The task and finish forum was a valuable forum for agencies and organisations to coordinate and network, and it was felt that the council should facilitate similar sessions, or an annual Child Exploitation summit, through the scrutiny committee. This would also be an opportunity for agencies and organisations to present how they were implementing the Home Office's exploitation disruption toolkit.

4.8 Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people

The group was concerned about the safeguarding of young people transitioning to adulthood. It understood that the responsibilities of the council to provide services for looked after children and care leavers existed up to the age of 25. There was concern that vulnerable young people leaving child protection services at 18, such as those subject to a child in need plans, would no longer receive support through the council but may continue to be vulnerable to exploitation. Exploitation of vulnerable individuals does not stop at the age of 18.

It was reported to the group that work on adult exploitation was being undertaken at the council as an adult social care issue. The group felt that a clear pathway for vulnerable children (not in care) during transition to adulthood was necessary to involve a range of officers from both children's and adults' services. It was important that young people who were being exploited or who were vulnerable to exploitation still had access to support after the age of 18.

4.9 Licensing

As outlined under section 4.5 above, the group learned of the work being undertaken by the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators from the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC) to raise the awareness of door staff, retail security and other businesses in Herefordshire. It considered the recent changes to licensing arrangements for taxis which now included a requirement for taxi drivers to receive safeguarding training when applying for a license. The group felt that the provision of mandatory safeguarding training for other licenses such as premises licenses should be investigated by the executive.

4.10 Children not in school

The group learned of the important work of schools to identify and report safeguarding concerns and the council's work coordinating safeguarding training for teachers. There was concern that young people not engaged in school were at greater risk of exploitation as it provided perpetrators with a greater opportunity to exploit individuals and signs of exploitation would not be identified by teachers.

The group learned that the exploitation team at the council were doing some direct work with young people not engaged in school but that due to the resource required it was difficult to work with all children not in education that were considered at risk of exploitation. There was a proposal for the home education officer to access the contextual safeguarding training to ensure that: the signs of exploitation were recognised; detail could be provided to parents and families; and referrals to local agencies could be made. The group felt that work should be undertaken to determine the risk of exploitation to children not in school and whether additional resources should be dedicated to work with them.

The group also raised concerns about the risk of exploitation to children who were the subject of a fixed term exclusion from school. It was queried what risk assessment took place prior to the application of a fixed term exclusion. Confirmation was provided to the group that a proposal for all schools to complete a child at risk of exploitation form, to assess the risk to the child of Child Exploitation prior to an exclusion was being discussed at Head Teacher meetings, and secondary schools had agreed in principle to complete the form. The group felt that the introduction of this risk assessment should be expedited and recommended that the executive works with schools to ensure it was introduced universally across schools in the county.

5 Summary of Recommendations

From our findings, the spotlight review would like to make the following **10 recommendations** to the executive and ask that they are given appropriate consideration:

5.1 Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation

That the executive:

- **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**
- **undertakes publicity to raise awareness of Child Exploitation issues locally and promote the reporting of issues and concerns to assist disruption and prevention work.**

5.2 The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need

That the executive:

- **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**
- **investigate the potential of including those children presenting at the level 2 threshold of need in the exploitation risk assessment tool.**

5.3 Data sharing

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.

5.4 Mapping of current services and organisations

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.

5.5 Promotion of training and raising awareness

That the executive:

- **Considers the promotion of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to schools or groups of schools;**

- Investigates the provision of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to all members of the Council; and
- 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.

5.6 Signposting and reporting tools

That the executive:

- Undertakes a review of the signposting of information concerning Child Exploitation to identify improvements that could be easily accomplished across agencies; and
- Works with organisations involved in the development of the new reporting Tell Someone app to expedite its introduction.

5.7 Annual Child Exploitation summit

That the children and young people scrutiny committee considers the scheduling of an annual Child Exploitation summit as part of its work programming.

5.8 Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people

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.

5.9 Licensing and safeguarding training

That the executive considers what other licenses granted by the council could include a requirement for mandatory safeguarding training.

5.10 Children not in school

That the executive:

- 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
- works with schools to ensure that a Child Exploitation risk assessment is conducted on individual pupils ahead of the application of fixed term exclusions.

Title of review	Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group
Scope	
Reason for review	<p>The work programme of the children and young people scrutiny committee has identified the issue of Child Exploitation as a topic to be undertaken by a task and finish group. The review into Child Exploitation will cover the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).</p> <p>This topic has been identified by the scrutiny committee as a priority over concerns regarding county lines activity, as a form of child criminal exploitation, in the West Midlands. Furthermore it is felt to be a critical element of the work of the committee to scrutinise data relating to child sexual exploitation and examine initiatives/projects to address its incidence in Herefordshire.</p>
Links to the corporate plan	<p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire corporate plan and other key plans and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and • Secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
Summary of the review and terms of reference	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive relevant data on the incidence of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire. • To learn from relevant agencies what projects and initiatives have been established to address Child Exploitation. • To assess partnership and joint working between agencies to address Child Exploitation. • To consider the introduction of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and examine its effectiveness. <p>The review will ensure that a focus is retained on the experience of children and young people to understand how work undertaken by stakeholders is focused on safeguarding and supporting them.</p>
	<p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The task and finish group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data from other areas. (Meeting One) • Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire. (Meeting One)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance around Child Exploitation including the child exploitation disruption toolkit (Meeting One) • Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • Develop an understanding of the joint working between local agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working. (Meeting Two) • To consider how the latest guidance from central government, <i>the child exploitation disruption toolkit</i>, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee. (Meeting Three) <p>Membership (to be determined):</p> <p>Consideration could be given to the co-option of a representative of a children's charity e.g. Children's Society/NSPCC/Barnardos. Such a co-optee would provide specialist knowledge and expertise to the Group's consideration of Child Exploitation.</p> <p>Councillor Diana Toynbee (chairperson) Councillor Paul Andrews Councillor Peter Jinman Councillor Mike Jones Councillor David Summers Vacancy – member from the general scrutiny committee</p> <p>Two co-optees from voluntary/charitable organisations will be invited to join the task and finish group.</p>
What will NOT be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination of any individual cases concerning Child Exploitation. However anonymised case studies might assist the Group in completing the review.
Potential outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the current statistics and data in respect of Child Exploitation; • Assurance that partnership working between local agencies is effective and there are no gaps in the provision of services; • Assurance that appropriate projects and initiatives are in place at local agencies to address Child Exploitation and they are effective; and • Assurance that the latest guidance from Government is being applied and is effective in combatting Child Exploitation.
Key Questions	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Child Sexual Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Child Criminal Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire; • Which local organisations and agencies have a role to play in combatting Child Exploitation and how do they work in partnership; • What projects/initiatives are currently in progress at local agencies focused on combatting Child Exploitation; • What preventative work is being undertaken to combat Child Exploitation; • How are agencies working with other local areas to understand patterns/trends and work on preventative measures; • How are local agencies seeking to implement the latest government guidance; and • Is the government's latest guidance an effective tool to combat Child Exploitation?
Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet member children and families Cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety
Key stakeholders / Consultees	<p>Internal – Children's safeguarding – The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</p> <p>External – West Mercia Police – Youth Offending Service – Community Safety Partnership – Local Safeguarding Children's Board (or its successor) – Children's Charities (E.g. Children's Society/NSPCC/Barnardos)</p>
Potential witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from children's safeguarding, Herefordshire Council, to include the MASH. • West Mercia Police • The Youth Offending Service • Safeguarding Partners Board • Children's Charities (children's charities will be asked to present the voice of the child to the task and finish group) • Community safety partnership
Research Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends and statistics relating to Child Exploitation in Herefordshire; • Responsibilities of local agencies in respect of Child Exploitation; • Latest reports concerning Child Exploitation e.g. <u>Counting Lives</u> – Children's Society Report – July 2019; and • Latest guidance from government including the Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit.
Potential Visits	A site visit to the MASH would be a useful exercise for the Group.
Publicity Requirements	Following the conclusion of the task Report back to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

Outline Timetable (to be determined): (following decision by the children and young people scrutiny committee to commission the Review)	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	Committee meeting – 16 September 2019
Meeting One	8 November 2019
Meeting Two	2 December 2019
Meeting Three	6 December 2019
Present final report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	January 2019

Group Members	
Chair	Cllr Diana Toynbee
Support Members	Cllr Paul Andrews Cllr Jennie Hewitt Cllr Peter Jinman Cllr Mike Jones Cllr David Summers
Co-optees	Representatives of The Children's Society Prevention Programme – please see appendix
Support Officers	J Coleman M Evans



Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Tuesday 2 June
Title of report:	Work programme 2020 - 2021
Report by:	Democratic Services Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review the committee's work programme 2020/21; receive the executive response to the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review and note the recommendation tracker.

The initial version of the committee's work programme for the current council year, 2020/21, was agreed at the meeting of the committee on 16 March 2020. Since that meeting the following changes have been made to the business to be considered by the committee:

- The report concerning a pre-scrutiny of the decision on accommodation and support framework for care leavers has been withdrawn from the current meeting and will be brought to the scrutiny committee later in the year. The development of the proposal has been delayed due to the Covid-19 emergency.
- The item concerning the outcome of the review of safeguarding cases involving peer on peer abuse in schools has been allocated to the current meeting of the scrutiny committee.
- The youth justice plan 2020/21 has been withdrawn from the current meeting; arrangements for the report in 2020/21 are being considered.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

- (a) review the 2020/21 work programme at appendix a and discuss any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme;
- (b) receive and note the responses of the executive and the Department for Education to the recommendations from the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review (appendix b); and
- (c) note 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 to 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 following changes have been made to the work programme since the last meeting of the committee on 16 March 2020:
 - The report concerning a pre-scrutiny of the decision on accommodation and support framework for care leavers has been withdrawn from the current meeting and will be brought to the scrutiny committee later in the year. The development of the proposal has been delayed due to the Covid-19 emergency;
 - The item concerning the outcome of the review of safeguarding cases involving peer on peer abuse in schools has been allocated to the current meeting of the scrutiny committee.
 - The youth justice plan 2020/21 has been withdrawn from the current meeting; arrangements for the report in 2020/21 are being considered.

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 at 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 section relating to co-option below).
7. The peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review took place on 16 December. The executive response to the recommendations from the spotlight review are attached at appendix b. Correspondence to the Department for Education and a response concerning the spotlight review recommendations are also included in appendix b.

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 work programme and/or task and finish group membership.
9. The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

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

Forward plan

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

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

Suggestions for scrutiny from members of the public

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

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

Community impact

13. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key

elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

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.

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: the work programme attached at appendix a was agreed by the committee at its last meeting on 16 March 2020.

Appendices

- Appendix a – Work Programme 2020/21
 Appendix b – Executive and Department for Education response to the outcomes and recommendations of the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review
 Appendix c – Recommendation tracker

Background papers

None identified.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

2 June 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 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.	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	
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.	Emma Booth	Performance Review
Corporate Parenting Strategy – annual report	To consider the updated action plan to the corporate parenting strategy and receive a performance report against the objectives.	Gill Cox	Performance review
Adoption Service and Fostering Service annual reports	To receive the annual reports from the adoption and fostering services and consider the outcomes and recommendations. To make recommendations to the cabinet member on the operation of the services during 2020/21.	Gill Cox	Performance review

Meeting date: 15 September 2020 – 1.00 p.m.		Despatch: 7 September	
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
Meeting date: 1 December 2020 – 1.00 p.m. <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.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Meeting date: 2 February 2021 – 1.00 p.m. <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	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority	Liz Elgar	Performance Review

Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan	Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan.		
--	---	--	--

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**

- Early Help Strategy – policy review and development item – scrutiny panel - **Proposed**
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) – task and finish group – **Proposed**

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, John Burgess	Pre-decision call-in
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.	Keith Barham	Performance Review

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

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review]

<p>In December 2019 a spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools was conducted.</p> <p>The following was recommended to the executive:</p>				
<p>Recommendation i, ii and iii</p>	<p><u>School Policies</u></p> <p>i) That the executive promotes to all schools in Herefordshire the implementation of distinct, stand-alone peer on peer abuse child safeguarding policies;</p> <p>ii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that exclusion policies explicitly state the forms of peer on peer abuse that will result in permanent exclusion;</p> <p>iii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that peer on peer abuse policies contain provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility;</p>			
<p>Executive Response</p>	<p>Partially agreed with the exception of ii) - commentary on the 'exclusion policies'. Such policies do not exist in schools. Exclusions are normally covered within a school behaviour policy. Policy recommendation ii) above is therefore complex: Legal advice is to treat each case on a case by case basis and as such defining which forms will lead to permanent exclusion may not be straightforward because under equalities law and exclusion guidance a pupils' SEND need and other safeguarding concerns e.g. criminal exploitation risk must be taken into consideration. However we will work towards clearer definition of what is deemed serious enough for exclusion.</p> <p>Work is already underway to promote stronger stand-alone policies in regard to peer on peer abuse. Many schools already have such policies. We will recommend that these policies should cover provision for children both inside and outside the criminal justice system and for children under the age of criminal responsibility.</p> <p>It should be noted that many of our schools are academies and we cannot guarantee or enforce such policies upon them. Ultimately it is the governing body of a school which has agrees all school policies whether it is a maintained or academy school.</p>			
<p>Action</p>	<p>Owner</p>	<p>By When</p>	<p>Target/Success Criteria</p>	<p>Progress</p>
<p>1. Stand-alone peer on peer abuse policies for all schools are promoted as best practice and that these policies should consider provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility through briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs</p>	<p>Learning and Achievement Team</p>	<p>31st January 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted reports state that safeguarding, including peer on peer abuse is 	

<p>2. Briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs promote changes to behaviour policies that include information on what types of peer on peer abuse 'MAY' lead to a permanent exclusion</p> <p>3. The annual section 175/157 audit is amended to ensure it includes a new question relating to a separate peer on peer abuse policy</p>			<p>effective in all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop reviews of school policies show that a school has a separate peer on peer abuse policy from September 2020 • Desk top reviews of school behaviour policies show that schools have considered what peer on peer abuse behaviours 'MAY' result in a permanent exclusion • Power point presentations from Education 	
--	--	--	--	--

			<p>Safeguarding meetings, Primary Heads' briefings, HASH meetings and COG briefings evidence that points 1 and 2 have been promoted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 175/157 audit amended to include a new question on separate peer on peer abuse policies for the 2020/21 audit 	
--	--	--	---	--

Recommendation iv	That the children and young people scrutiny committee writes to the department for education (DfE) to outline the comments of witnesses at the spotlight review concerning existing peer on peer abuse guidance for schools. In particular, correspondence should highlight the requirement for specific guidance for schools to develop their own peer on peer abuse policies.
Scrutiny Response	A letter has been sent to the Department for Education by the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. The letter and response are provided below.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To finalise and send the letter to the DfE. The response of the DfE is provided below.	Democratic Services	End of March 2020	Letter sent to DfE	The letter and response are provided below.

Recommendation v	<u>Herefordshire Council review of historic cases</u> That the executive provides the outcome of the current review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer to peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to the spotlight review and the children and young people scrutiny committee;			
Executive Response	Agreed. This will be provided to children and young people's scrutiny once completed within the work programme of the committee.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Provide a report on the outcome of the review, including lessons learned to the children and young people's scrutiny committee	Director of children and families	After the review has been completed which is due by end of April 2020	Report provided to children and young people's scrutiny	Review commenced January 2020.

Recommendation vi	<u>Data collection of incidence of peer on peer abuse cases and national reporting</u> That the children and young people scrutiny committee write to the DfE to encourage the establishment of a national database on peer on peer abuse cases including data on:			
--------------------------	---	--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level 4 referrals to MASHs and convictions relating to rape, assault, assault by penetration and sexual assault; and • peer on peer abuse cases not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault to allow for information to be compiled on the scale and diversity of peer on peer abuse cases 			
Scrutiny Response	A letter has been sent to the Department for Education by the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. The letter and response are provided below.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To finalise and send the letter to the DfE. The response of the DfE is provided below.	Democratic Services	End of March 2020	Letter sent to DfE	The letter and response are provided below.

Recommendation vii	<u>Promotion of training in schools</u>			
	That the executive encourages all schools to invite the following trainers: CLD Trust ambassadors to provide training on positive relationships between peers; vulnerability trainers from the office of the police and crime commissioner; and the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre.			
Executive Response	Agreed – much training has already taken place and which addresses the above issues. We will commit to encouraging schools to invite or attend training being provided by the three organisations above, but we will also review whether any other trainers could assist this work.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
We will undertake a review of trainers who could help support this work, including the three above, to contribute to an annual safeguarding conference. The programme is already in planning phase (February 2020) Promotion of training will also be developed in the action covered in recommendation ix	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	November 2020	Successful annual conference programme includes the three specific organisations	Review March 2020 to set up next conference

			mentioned above – and others	
--	--	--	------------------------------	--

Recommendation viii	<u>Risk Assessments</u>			
	That the executive works with the Crown Prosecution Service and the West Mercia Youth Justice Board to clarify responsibility for the production of the pre-conviction risk assessments for children attending court in peer on peer abuse cases and considers a suitable provider for risk assessments in the future.			
Executive Response	Not agreed. The Youth Offending Service are in negotiations with the Crown Prosecution Service on the matter of the completion of the pre conviction risk assessments (AIM assessment). The Youth Offending Service are the appropriate agency to lead on this. There is agreement from YOS that Children and Families are not the appropriate agency to complete AIM assessments. As such it is not an area for Children and Families to become involved with at this stage, as clarity on this matter will be reached via YOS discussions with CPS, and communicated via the West Mercia Youth Justice Board which Herefordshire DCS attends.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation ix	<u>Resource pool for schools</u>			
	That the executive considers the establishment of a pool of resources for schools to access to address complex cases of peer on peer abuse.			
Executive Response	Partially agreed. We will look into what resources are available and promote what is suitable. If available, these will provide access to high quality advice and appropriate school level resources. However the quality of such resources is variable and schools are free to choose what resources they use. Additional resources in terms of time by specialist officers to support and advice is being planned and will have greater impact – and we can consider additional training for such advisers.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
We will undertake a review of which resources are likely to be helpful. There is little available at present and	Assistant Director,	December 2020	On line support available	Review May 2020 to agree which resources to publicise as appropriate.

quality is variable. In addition we will provide on line advice and support. We will consider additional training and advice for specialists when working with schools.	Education, Development and Skills			However, the greater need is for specialist officers to work with schools who are fully trained. Deadline for appointment is June 2020
---	-----------------------------------	--	--	---

Recommendation x	<u>Family Support Workers</u>			
	That the executive considers what extra resources can be committed to the work of family support workers with schools.			
Executive Response	Partially Agreed - We will consider how to develop family support work in schools, pooling the resources of the council with opportunities for funding from schools.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Schools to be encouraged to access support services for Children and Young People and their families through an early help assessment Develop the programme of family support workers attached to schools, following the success in Leominster and Ross on Wye	Early Help Manager	September 2020	Families identified where there is either a risk of or peer abuse identified, supported and sustainable change achieved.	1. At least 6 months sustainable change achieved by June 2021.

Recommendation xi	<u>Future meetings of the spotlight review</u>			
	That the children and young people scrutiny committee agree further meetings of the spotlight review to: consider a greater level of data to provide a more informed understanding of the scale and complexity of peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire; monitor the progress against the spotlight review's recommendations and those arising from the review of historic cases; and make further recommendations as necessary.			
Scrutiny Response	Following the completion of the review of historic peer on peer abuse cases the chairperson of the spotlight review will be consulted on a date for a further meeting of the spotlight review.			

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To consult the chairperson on a future meeting of the spotlight review.	Democratic Services	End of May 2020	A date for a further meeting of the spotlight review is agreed.	Consultation with the chairperson over a future date of the spotlight review will occur once the historic review of cases has been concluded.

Recommendation xii	<u>Council policies</u>			
	That the executive gives consideration as to how to include reference to peer on peer abuse in relevant council policy (e.g. the children and young people plan).			
Executive Response	Agreed. Reference to peer on peer abuse is already included within the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2024.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Policies produced by the council will be developed to reflect the issues facing children from contextual safeguarding, which does include peer on peer abuse	Director for children and families	When policies are reviewed or new ones are created	Clear action is taken to address contextual safeguarding as a result and this can be evidenced.	Included in the children and young people's plan 2019-2020. Ofsted reviewed Herefordshire's approach in the focused visit December 2019 and noted that "The local authority has improved its understanding and overview of contextual safeguarding in relation to peer-on-peer abuse and has assured itself that schools recognise this issue and work with social care services to minimise risk."

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Please ask for:

Direct line / Extension: 01432 383690

Fax:

E-mail: carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk

3 April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as the Chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee at Herefordshire Council. In December 2019 the committee undertook a spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools. The spotlight review agreed a number of recommendations around the issues of peer on peer abuse in schools; the full report containing all those recommendations agreed is enclosed. Within the recommendations agreed by the spotlight review two required letters to be sent to the Department for Education concerning: current guidance provided to schools to address cases of peer on peer abuse; and the collection of data concerning incidence of peer on peer abuse cases.

I have set out these recommendations below, together with summaries of the discussions that occurred at the spotlight review providing the context for the recommendations.

Recommendation 1 - Current guidance provided to schools to address cases of peer on peer abuse

Recommendation - That the children and young people scrutiny committee writes to the department for education (DfE) to outline the comments of witnesses at the spotlight review concerning existing peer on peer abuse guidance for schools. In particular, correspondence should highlight the requirement for specific guidance for schools to develop their own peer on peer abuse policies.

Supporting text - The spotlight review questioned the guidance from the DfE concerning the separation of victim and perpetrator and whether it was felt to be adequate. The difficulty of ensuring there was no contact between victim and perpetrator was raised and the guidance concerning the potential return to a school of a perpetrator who had been convicted of a criminal offence. It was confirmed that the separation of victim and perpetrator did present a challenge but schools followed statutory guidance and employed methods such as staggered start times and establishing safe areas at break times.

It was queried whether guidance should be amended to state that a perpetrator should be suspended or removed from a school if they were convicted or currently under investigation. It was explained that such guidance would require at a national level a change in guidance relating to exclusion rules and any legislation that underpinned it however it was confirmed that if a pupil was convicted of rape or a serious sexual assault it was likely they would have breached school disciplinary policy and would be excluded from school.

The spotlight review heard that Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 had assisted to provide better guidance regarding peer on peer abuse in schools and demonstrated that the issue was receiving prominence nationally. In producing a school policy for peer on peer abuse in schools the importance of learning from best practice was highlighted whilst retaining a focus on the contextual elements of each school.

The spotlight review felt that guidance from the DfE could be enhanced to include greater detail around the existing guidance relating to the separation of perpetrator and victim and that exclusion policies at schools should state explicitly the types of peer-on-peer abuse that could result in an exclusion. It was also felt that the likely consequences of committing peer on peer abuse should be outlined in schools disciplinary policies. It was recognised that some schools already included such details in their disciplinary policies but it was felt that the council should encourage all schools to make this inclusion.

Recommendation 2 – Data collection of incidence of peer on peer abuse cases and national reporting

Recommendation – That the children and young people scrutiny committee write to the DfE to encourage the establishment of a national database on peer on peer abuse cases including data on:

- Level 4 referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and convictions relating to rape, assault, assault by penetration and sexual assault; and
- Peer on peer abuse cases not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault to allow for information to be compiled on the scale and diversity of peer on peer abuse cases.

Supporting text - The spotlight review considered the data relating to the incidence of peer on peer abuse that was compiled from the multi-agency referral forms (MARF) submitted to the MASH. It was queried what reporting of peer on peer abuse incidents not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault took place and how this data was compiled. It was explained that schools did not have to report peer on peer abuse incidents not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault therefore such statistics were not collected.

There was concern that without reporting of the full range of peer on peer incidents it was not possible to gain an accurate perspective of the scale of the issue. There was further concern that there were no national statistics regarding such a serious issue in schools and it was felt the DfE should be lobbied to establish a reporting method and data set for peer on peer abuse cases nationally.

The spotlight review felt that the council should work to compile the data in Herefordshire that was available and then analyse this data to determine where gaps existed. This would assist the development of a dataset relating to peer on peer abuse in schools in Herefordshire.

I would be most grateful if you could review the information provided above and provide a response to the two recommendations agreed by the spotlight review. In particular your thoughts and comments would be welcomed on the following:

- The adequacy of guidance to schools to:
 - address cases of peer on peer abuse, in particular advice concerning the separation of victim and alleged perpetrator when both remain at the same school following an incident; and
 - require all schools to implement specific policies concerning peer on peer abuse.
- The proposal that a national database be established of all incidents of peer on peer abuse cases in schools to gain a more detailed picture on the scale and range of peer on peer abuse cases.

I understand that the consultation: Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2020 has recently been suspended due to coronavirus, COVID-19. Can I request please that the recommendations and comments of the spotlight review raised in this letter to form part of the consultation.

If you need any further information or wish to discuss the contents of this letter please contact me using the details above.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Carole A Gandy

Councillor CA Gandy

Chairman of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Response from the DfE received by email on 28 April 2020.

Dear Councillor Gandy

Thank you for your letter of 3 April regarding recommendations from the children and young people scrutiny committee's spotlight review on peer on peer abuse.

I would first of all like to assure you that the department takes the issue of peer on peer abuse extremely seriously and has taken significant steps during recent years in order to strengthen expectations on schools and to support them in preventing abuse, and to support victims when abuse takes place.

I appreciate you taking the time to forward the recommendations from the committee.

Recommendation 1 - Current guidance provided to schools to address cases of peer on peer abuse - That the children and young people scrutiny committee writes to the department for education (DfE) to outline the comments of witnesses at the spotlight review concerning existing peer on peer abuse guidance for schools. In particular, correspondence should highlight the requirement for specific guidance for schools to develop their own peer on peer abuse policies.

With regard to the first recommendation, the department already provides [detailed advice](#) for schools and colleges which sets out what child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring and what to do when it does occur, or is alleged to have occurred.

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) statutory guidance was updated in September 2018 to include a new Part five which provides advice on how schools and colleges should respond to reports of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment. Part two of KCSIE is already clear that schools and colleges should have a child protection policy and that it should include:

- procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse;
- how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with;
- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse will be supported;
- a clear statement that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”;
- recognition of the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that KCSIE girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; and
- the different forms peer on peer abuse can take, such as:

- sexual violence and sexual harassment. Part five of sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery): the policy should include the school's or college's approach to it. The department provides [Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice](#) for schools. The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education Group has published [Advice for Schools and Colleges on Responding to Sexting Incidents](#); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

The above provides a strong framework for any school when considering their child protection policy. It is right that the detail of that policy (and other safeguarding policies) is left in the hands of local senior leaders and the designated safeguarding lead. They know their children and school and can ensure their policy is tailored to local needs in a way that detailed nationally prescriptive guidance could not.

Recommendation 2 – Data collection of incidences of peer on peer abuse cases and national reporting - That the children and young people scrutiny committee write to the DfE to encourage the establishment of a national database on peer on peer abuse cases including data on:

- **Level 4 referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and convictions relating to rape, assault, assault by penetration and sexual assault; and**
- **Peer on peer abuse cases not involving rape, sexual assault by penetration or sexual assault to allow for information to be compiled on the scale and diversity of peer on peer abuse cases.**

The department operates in the wider child protection system as described in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. Reporting and data sharing are key aspects of the system. If there is a child protection related concern in a school (be it an allegation of child on child sexual violence or a concern that a child is being abused or neglected at home) then it is rightly the school that will lead the response to any allegations or concerns as set out in Part one of KCSIE.

KCSIE is already clear that schools should record in writing all concerns, discussions and decisions made in relation to safeguarding. Schools should make referrals to children's social care and the police as appropriate.

Through those referrals the department has access to data such as:

- Child protection data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need> (the department has strengthened the information that will be gathered in this data by including new options for social workers to record peer on peer abuse)
- Police data: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice> and

- MoJ data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-annual-statistics-2016-to-2017>

The department also carefully scrutinises external reports from respected organisations such as:

- NSPCC How safe are our Children: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2017/how-safe-are-our-children-2017/>
- Child net – project deSHAME: <https://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame>

There are also important checks and balances in the system that allow the department, supported by Ofsted and other inspectorates to hold individual schools to account, including on the adequacy of their safeguarding arrangements, as required.

The department is not persuaded that additional data gathering as described above would be proportional or helpful.

Finally, as you are aware the recently launched consultation on KCSIE has been suspended in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, and when we are in a position to commence the consultation again, we will as requested keep your recommendations on record.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2020-0013790. If you need to respond to us, please visit: <https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus> and quote your reference number.

As part of our commitment to improving the service we provide to our customers, we are interested in hearing your views and would welcome your comments via our website at: https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Policy_official_feedback .

Yours sincerely

K WALKER

Independent Education Division

Web: <https://www.education.gov.uk>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/educationgovuk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>



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

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

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

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"> • 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 • Asks that a report concerning the dental health initiatives is provided to the committee setting out key performance indicators for the proposals. 		Completed
	Update on reducing the number of looked after children	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the work that has been undertaken and the progress made in implementing systems to reduce the numbers of looked after children; and • 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. 	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"> • Supports the additional areas of investment identified in the budget; • Writes to the local MPs to request details of actions to lobby central government to improve oral health in Herefordshire; and • 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. 	<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 to this meeting – 2 June 2020
16 March 2020	School Examination Performance	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the report and the good results in key 		Completed

	2019	<p>stage 1 and key stage 2; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request that in future the presentation of the results is set against performance in earlier years. 		
	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"> 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. requests a briefing note on the mind of my own (MOMO) app. proposes that all members of the children and young people scrutiny committee be invited to the performance challenge session. agrees that meetings are scheduled four weeks after the release of the quarterly report concerning the safeguarding and family support improvement plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This suggestion is being looked into and future reports of progress against the improvement plan will outline how the recommendation could be taken forward. Circulated on 15 April 2020. Arrangements are being looked into. The scheduling of meetings is being looked into. 	

