

# Agenda

## Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 23 March 2021**

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Time: **1.00 pm**

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Place: **Online meeting only**

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Notes: To view the meeting please access the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtHKntRRmPs>,

**Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer**

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

## **Membership**

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

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

**Co-optees**            **Andy James**            **Parent Governor Representative – SEND Sector**  
**Sam Pratley**           **Church Representative – Diocese of Hereford**

## Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive apologies for absence</p>	
2.	<p><b>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings on 12 and 19 January 2021.</p>	7 - 22
5.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 17 March.            Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i></p>	
6.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council.  <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Wednesday 17 March.            Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:  <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i></p>	
7.	<p><b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES MENTAL HEALTH</b></p> <p>To review children and young people's mental health services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A review of schools pastoral support and a mental health pathway;</li> <li>- A presentation from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust on CYP mental health and impact of COVID19; and</li> <li>- A presentation by Healthwatch Herefordshire on Schools Mental Health Forum and Youth Watch.</li> </ul>	23 - 66
8.	<p><b>HEREFORDSHIRE CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021-2030 FOR SPECIALIST SETTINGS EDUCATING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SEND</b></p> <p>To consider the outcomes of the Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 For Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SEND consultation and to determine any recommendations to the executive, which may enhance the effectiveness of the plans.</p>	67 - 104
9.	<p><b>REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE</b></p>	105 - 234

**SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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

To review the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership annual report 2019/20 (appendix C) and to seek the views of the children and young people's scrutiny committee.

**10. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

To agree the work programme and meeting dates for the 2021/22 administrative year. To agree the scoping document for the paediatric therapies task and finish group.

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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## Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Online meeting only on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 1.00 pm

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

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

**Co-optees:** Sam Pratley

**In attendance:** Councillors Hitchiner and Harvey

**Officers:** Director for children and families, Interim Head of Legal Services, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support, Assistant Director Childrens Safeguarding Quality and Improvement, Chief finance officer and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills

### 17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Andrews and Mr Andy James.

### 18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 19. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting on 1 December are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 20. 2021/22 BUDGET SETTING

The Committee considered a report by the Leader of the Council which outlined the draft budget proposals for 2021/22 relating to Children and Families. The report was introduced by the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and the Director of Children and Families (DCF) who provided the presentation attached to the report. The Committee considered a report by the Leader of the Council which outlined the draft budget proposals for 2021/22 relating to Children and Families. The report was introduced by the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and the Director of Children and Families (DCF) who provided the presentation attached to the report and also noted the risks that have been increasing in recent years regarding contextual safeguarding, including county lines. These may be increasing as a result of the impact of the pandemic. It was recognised that a number of elements were demand led and that some of the work already taking place such as early help and the edge of care service was having an effect to address some of the demand. The spend on placements had been more than planned in the budget for a number of years. Many local authorities faced overspends in this area. The council had taken an approach to treat spend over planned as a corporate pressure and this was to continue as part of the overall budget setting. The DCF explained that the whole family approach outlined in the diagram in the presentation would be explored in greater detail with the

committee at a future scrutiny session. The DCF explained that the whole family approach outlined in the diagram in the presentation would be explored in greater detail with the committee at a future scrutiny session.

The principal points below were raised during the debate:

- The committee recognised the progress that the Children and Families directorate had achieved and the improvement in performance and leadership of the directorate.
- The increase in the funding to the directorate's base budget was welcomed.
- Concern was raised regarding the feasibility of the stretch savings target for the recruitment of 30 foster carers per annum over the next five years. It was felt that the target may be achievable in the medium term but it was questioned whether it was realistic during 2021/22 and 2022/23. The executive was recommended to review the feasibility of the savings target during the next two financial years.
- It was felt that to assist the committee to assess the budget and savings for the Children and Families directorate further detail regarding the overall budget of the directorate and the council would be useful to provide vital context. *The DCF explained that further detail regarding the budget of the Children and Families directorate could be circulated after the meeting. The CFO explained that work could be undertaken with officers to determine how to present regular budget data to the committee in future.*
- The impact of the COVID19 pandemic on the budget was queried and what additional funding may be forthcoming from the government to support mental health services for young people. It was requested that the committee receive an update on forms of funding for mental health support for young people. *The Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills explained that Department for Education funding was available to allocate to schools for mental health support for young people which would be reported to the committee. The CFO explained that regular returns were submitted to the Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) with details of the impact of the pandemic on the council but there was not an awareness of any further forms of funding from central government.*
- The committee queried the savings accruing from the supported accommodation arrangements for care leavers. *The DCF explained that the new facility in Wide Marsh Street, that had been recently been completed, would help in the realisation of savings as the council was less reliant on out of county placements. The completion of the facility in Bath Street would also assist in the savings associated with supported accommodation.*

The Leader explained that it was correct that the committee focus on the savings element. A balance needed to be achieved between the proposed savings and the rate of Council Tax that was set. It was acknowledged that the full impact of COVID-19 was not yet understood but lobbying of MHCLG was being undertaken.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services explained that in future the Chairpersons of the scrutiny committees would be consulted to determine what detail to include in the scrutiny budget reports in future years. It was acknowledged that there were significant pressures in the Children and Families directorate and a balance was sought between realising savings where possible and continuing to provide services.

The Cabinet Member Children and Families spoke and explained that there was uncertainty about the final impact of the pandemic and the Children and Families directorate was having to be reactive to changing advice from government. Improvements had been made in the performance of the directorate demonstrated and it was acknowledged that it would be useful for the committee to have the overall budget context contained in the report.

Councillor Carole Gandy proposed and Councillor Phillip Howells seconded the recommendations below which were agreed unanimously by the committee.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

- **Recognises improvements in the performance of the service and welcomes the additional funding to the base budget;**
- **Queries the feasibility of the stretch target for the recruitment of foster carers in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years and recommends to the executive that the target in those next two years in reconsidered;**
- **Requests an update to a future of meeting of the committee on funding available from government to address the mental health impacts of the pandemic on young people;**
- **Requests that in future years the scrutiny committee Chairpersons are consulted over the detail required in the report to the committees; and**
- **Acknowledges the efforts of members and officers in the work that has been undertaken to compile the budget for 2021/22.**

**21. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The Committee considered its work programme in the current 2020/21 year and a scoping document for a proposed task and finish group concerning paediatric therapies.

The report concerning school examination performance which was scheduled for the meeting of the committee in March was discussed and it was felt that the report should be changed to a review of what measures schools had undertaken during the lockdown (e.g. remote learning) and the success of such measures as well as covering what was to happen for students in the summer 2021.

It was felt that the approval of the scoping document for the paediatric therapies task and finish group should be deferred to a later meeting of the committee when the pressures of the pandemic on the health service had eased.

It was stated that an exercise would be undertaken to update the recommendation tracker attached to the work programme.

Councillor Carole Gandy proposed and Councillor Diana Toynbee seconded the recommendations below which were agreed unanimously by the committee.

**RESOLVED: That the committee:**

- (a) reviews the 2020/21 work programme at appendix a, discusses any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme and agrees the changes since the previous meeting of the committee, as listed in paragraph 3 and including the change set out above to the school performance item at the March meeting;**
- (b) defers approval the scoping document (appendix b) for the paediatric therapies task and finish group and consideration of its membership (including any co-optees) and the appointment of a chairperson to a later meeting date; and**

- (c) notes the recommendation tracker in appendix c and asks that outstanding issues are identified and followed-up.

## 22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 19 January at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

**Chairperson**

## **Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Online meeting only on Tuesday 19 January 2021 at 10.00 am**

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

**Councillors:** Kath Hey, Phillip Howells and Mike Jones

**Co-optees:** Andy James

**In attendance:** Councillors Jonathan Lester, Felicity Norman and Alan Seldon  
Sarah Kelly, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the HOPE family centre

**Officers:** Interim Head of Legal Services, Democratic services manager, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support, Assistant Director Childrens Safeguarding Quality and Improvement and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills, Children's Joint Commissioning Manager, Head of Service Early Help, Children's Commissioning and Contacts Lead and Children's Centre Services Manager

### **23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Andrews, Councillor Paul Andrews and Mr Sam Pratley.

### **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A declaration of interest was raised by a member in attendance as a local member to the item at agenda item number six, provision of children centre service in Bromyard area: pre decision scrutiny. Councillor Jonathan Lester declared an other interest as his family had used the nursery at the HOPE centre and he had supported the work of the HOPE centre through involvement with local charities.

### **25. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 12)**

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

### **26. PROVISION OF CHILDREN CENTRE SERVICE IN BROMYARD AREA: PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee considered a report by the Director Children and Families concerning pre-decision scrutiny of the decision regarding the provision of children centre services in the Bromyard area. The Children's Joint Commissioning Manager (CJCM) introduced the report and outlined the principal points below:

- The current contract with the HOPE centre provided for 11 hours work with families per week. It was recognised that the provider had exceeded the contract and provided an average 17.5 hours per week;

- No cuts to the service were proposed; the £25,000 cost of the contract with HOPE would continue to provide children's centre services;
- The proposal would see the integration of the contracted service in Bromyard into the service that operated across the county;
- The proposed change to the delivery of the service would be expected to increase capacity for direct work and enable a quick response to changing demand.

The Chairperson of the committee spoke and explained that it was important that when issues of local sensitivity were identified the scrutiny committee should be informed and have the opportunity to conduct scrutiny where appropriate.

The local member for Bromyard West read aloud a representation from Bromyard and Winslow Town Council. The Town Council explained that the proposal to bring the service in-house was not appropriate in the current circumstances, with particular reference to the pandemic.

The local member for Bromyard West read aloud a representation from the local member for Bromyard Bringsty. The representation noted that there was no criticism in the officer report of the service provided by HOPE and the proposal appeared to be for the sake of consistency. An alternative option could be to offer to HOPE the opportunity to run services across the county. There was no reference in the officer report to the outstanding Ofsted rating and there was no evidence in the report that HOPE had been approached to discuss a possible variation of the contract. The proposal was evidence of the marginalisation of Bromyard and the cabinet member was asked to reconsider the proposal.

The local member for Bromyard West spoke on the proposal and raised the principal points below:

- HOPE had been the centre of the community in Bromyard for 20 years.
- It had been acknowledged that the relationship with HOPE was important and valuable but the proposed decision would undermine that relationship.
- The decision was proposed as the service provided by the HOPE centre did not conform to the prevailing arrangements for children's centres across the county.
- Emotive language had emerged at the recent Town Council meeting and it was concerning that the proposals for children centre services in Bromyard had been perceived as an attack by some participants at the meeting.
- It was noted that the previous comprehensive consultation concerning the centre and service had been carried out in 2017.
- The service provided by the HOPE centre was an exemplar of good practice and should be rolled-out across the county.

The local member for Three Crosses spoke on the proposal and raised the principal points below:

- The HOPE centre had been part of the Bromyard community for a significant time and provided a haven for young families.
- In respect of the services provided by the HOPE centre it was important to consider whether Bromyard was already being catered for and more statistics should be provided as evidence.
- The committee should question whether the service provided by the HOPE centre was the best way to deliver children's centre service. It should be considered as such.



- The withdrawal of funding would undermine an organisation which had benefited the local community in Bromyard. The HOPE centre provided a high level of support and a vital safety net for families and children.
- The council was encouraged to undertake more evaluation of the HOPE centre service and its benefit to the local community before a decision was made.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees of the HOPE Family Centre spoke and raised the principal points below:

- The HOPE centre was established in the late 1990's and is currently located in purpose built accommodation and delivers a range of integrated services to local families, including a nursery for 80 children, an outreach service to families and children in Bromyard and area, other support services including a contact centre funded by CAF/CASS, training and support and advice to parents.
- Council staff have said that demands for early help in Bromyard are lower than elsewhere which HOPE believes is a result of their integrated and effective approach.
- The HOPE centre had linked the provision of a statutory service with its own services to provide a holistic approach.
- Three qualified and experienced staff are employed at the centre who jointly provide 37.5 hours of work to fulfil the contract though it only pays for 11 hours, and the proposal risks losing their services and experience.
- The process to develop the proposal had been rushed. There had not been proper consultation with the HOPE centre or the local community.
- The timing of the change to the provision of the service during the pandemic was not appropriate.
- The council was encouraged to undertake a longer consultation, after the pandemic, to consider the proposals in greater depth and to then change the model if necessary.

During the debate the committee raised the principal points below:

- The lack of referrals for Early Help was raised and it was queried whether other providers had made referrals. *The CJCM explained that, while records showed that some Early Help Assessments had been undertaken, there had been no evidence of claims for families achieving sustainable change arising from cases that involved children's centre services in the Bromyard area.*
- The lack of a consultation and evaluation of alternative options was queried. There was concern that the process followed to develop the proposal was not sufficiently rigorous. *The CJCM explained that the development of the proposals had followed corporate guidelines. A consultation would have been useful but due to limited resources this had not been possible.*
- The impact of the proposal on the staff at the centre was raised. There was concern about the uncertainty caused to staff and service users at the centre and there needed to be greater consideration of such impacts in the proposal. The Chair of the HOPE Family Centre was asked if staff would be willing to transfer under TUPE. *The CJCM explained that the council would work with the centre to explore the possibility of TUPE for existing staff employed through the contract. The Chair of the HOPE Family Centre explained that the staff were not employed fulltime on the contract and carried out other work at the Centre and HOPE would lose their services if they transferred to Herefordshire Council under TUPE. In any case, none of the staff wanted to transfer. The Children's Centre Services Manager explained that there were sufficient resources at the council to cover those early help cases that were currently active.*
- The proposal concerned a change in the delivery of service. The financial and resource implications may not be significant but it was felt that the potential

impact on the delivery of a council service necessitated the involvement of scrutiny.

- It was queried why there was not a tendering exercise at an early stage in the development of the proposal to examine alternative options and determine what HOPE or other providers could offer. *The Children's Commissioning and Contracts Leads (CCCL) explained that it was necessary to determine the preferred delivery model, and whether this would be an in-house or commissioned service, before a potential tendering exercise took place to award a contract, and that the decision to be made was a choice between in-house or external delivery rather than whether an incumbent provider should be recontracted.*
- The performance of children's centres in other areas of the county was raised. The take up rates of children's centres demonstrated that delivery of service by the council was not a guarantee of a successful service.
- It was felt that greater consultation with the centre and service users was required before a decision could be taken and the timing of the decision during the current pandemic was considered to be a risk.
- The extension of the current contract with HOPE, for a period up to 12 months, was queried to enable an evaluation of the service provided by HOPE, more extensive consultation and an examination of alternative options. *The CCCL explained that there was the potential for a short extension. The interim Head of Legal Services explained that a longer term extension would require a variation of the current contract and involve consultation with HOPE.*
- It was felt that detail concerning the obsolescence of the Council's database system used at the HOPE centre was an important detail that should be included in the report. *The CJCM explained that this detail would be included in the decision report.*
- The uniqueness of the HOPE centre and its understanding of the Bromyard area was felt to be key to its success. Rather than ensuring consistency across the county, the provision of a service should consider what was best for the local community. Greater evidence was required that an in house service would match the service provided by the HOPE centre.
- The committee understood that the decision concerning the proposal was scheduled to take place in January but it was felt that a deferral of the decision should be considered by the cabinet member to allow for additional work to take place on the proposal.

The Cabinet Member Children and Families spoke on the debate and raised those principal points below:

- The committee was thanked for the debate and its comments.
- All involved in the debate and decision-making wanted what was best for local children and families.
- The cabinet member had attended the meeting of the Town Council that had debated the matter and understood the local sensitivity.
- The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the service provided by HOPE and the wide range of opportunities for children and families at the centre.
- The issues raised during the debate and the recommendations agreed would be considered.

Councillor Carole Gandy proposed and Councillor Phillip Howells seconded the recommendations below which were agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED: That the committee:**

- 1) **Has significant concerns about the timing of the proposed decision during the current pandemic and the implications for services users. The committee recommends deferral of the decision and extension of the current contract up to 12 months to enable:**
  - **A comprehensive consultation with the local community, service users and voluntary sector organisations;**
  - **Engagement with the HOPE Family Centre to ensure that the Council has necessary evidence to conduct a full and detailed evaluation of the service provided by the HOPE Family Centre and how it compares to the in-house service;**
  - **Greater exploration of alternative options including a potential tendering exercise for a commissioned service;**
  - **Work to ascertain what staffing arrangements would be put in place to ensure existing HOPE Family Centre staff have a greater degree of understanding about their future roles within the service; and**
  - **The committee to undertake a detailed scrutiny exercise on the proposal involving evidence from service users.**
  
- 2) **Recommends that in future the committee is made aware of issues of a sensitive and emotive concern to local communities as potential items for scrutiny.**

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm

**Chairperson**



Supplement – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 19 January 2021

Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Dr Whalley, Hereford	<p>Herefordshire has a centre in Bromyard of which it should be proud. The Hope centre, established through highly effective local entrepreneurial activity, via Europe and government funding, has a proven track record, over two decades, of powerful work across a rural community. It successfully engages the most challenged children and their parents. Recent research from Nuffield Foundation states whilst, " The funding environment for early years services is tough ...we should be looking at the opportunity to offer wrap-around and integrated services in ECEC settings..cohesive services for children and families... ,with key workers they trust".</p> <p>The Hope Centre is just such a service; these poorly justified proposed cuts will significantly destabilise the provision. Officers argue for a centralised Hereford based model; how could this possibly be as effective as the seamless service currently offered, in which local families have such confidence?</p>	Cabinet Member Children and Families

**Response:**

There is a high regard for the Hope Family Centre and the wider role that it fulfils in the Bromyard area, and the Council wishes to continue its positive working relationship with Hope for Children & Their Families Limited to enable effective partnership working throughout the local community.

The proposals are that a contracted service, valued at £25,000 per annum, is integrated with the service that is provided for the rest of Herefordshire. It is not proposed to make any cuts to the resource, and it is intended that the change will deliver more direct support for vulnerable children and families.

Providers that are contracted by the Council for a wide variety of services are aware that contract funding is agreed for a fixed period and are encouraged and expected to make long-term plans for the end of a contract so that their other activities may continue. Similar planning is also necessary when charitable or grant funding can end.

Only the senior management of the in-house service is centralised. Operational teams, including early years support workers and community connectors work in areas covering the north and south of the county, and can work flexibly from office bases, community settings or home. They have developed local knowledge and networks over several years, with strong partnership working with the local health visitors, midwives, GPs, early years settings, schools and community organisations to identify and support children and families that might need some additional Early Help.

This county-wide approach has successfully delivered sustainable change for many vulnerable families in line with the National Troubled Families Programme. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Herefordshire has achieved second and first quartile rankings compared to nationwide local authorities in achieving positive outcomes for vulnerable families and is the second highest performing area in the West Midlands.

In line with the national troubled families programme, where sustainable change has been achieved for families (through EHA interventions) it is possible to claim funding under payment by results arrangements. Since October 2018, 135 successful claims have been made for families solely or partially supported by Children’s Centre Services of which none were recorded for the Bromyard Reach area.

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**Supplementary Question:**

Confused by the response to my question, paragraph 2 states that there are no cuts proposed but the proposal to scrutiny is precisely to cut the £25,000 council contribution to the HOPE centre budget. The response to my question focuses on the national troubled families' programme. This was set up as a response to inner city riots providing interventions for the 400,000 most vulnerable families mostly with school age children. Focusing on the most vulnerable misses out on the preventative work designed to prevent families in Herefordshire becoming the most vulnerable. This is precisely the work in which the HOPE centre excels and for which it has received national and local recognition. At the least a proper independent review should be undertaken with an equality assessment and a community consultation to compare the effectiveness of the HOPE centre services and other council services. Now in the middle of a pandemic is not the time for the council to drop the ball.

**Response from Cabinet Member Children and Families:**

A written response would be provided to the points raised. Cuts were not contemplated but a different way of delivering the service; there would be no lessening of the service offered. On troubled families a response will be provided by officers involved in the delivery of the programme. The notion of early help informed the work of HOPE and others across the county; to anticipate and address issues at an early stage before a greater level of support is required and to improve outcome for children and families.

Written response provided – 12 March:

*There is a wide range of universally available early help and preventative work that is provided by organisations and communities across the county. Such work provides tremendous support to children, young people and families throughout Herefordshire. This includes activities like those that are offered by Hope for Children & Their Families Limited, that are provided without the direct involvement or funding of the council.*

*It has not been proposed to cut the level of investment in children's centre services. It is important to also understand that the £25,000 resource is not a contribution to an organisations budget, it is a contractual transaction between a purchaser and a provider, and as such a provider should be prepared for the end of a contract.*

*The council, along with other statutory partners, seek to ensure that there is effective targeted early help available when children, young people and families begin to experience additional needs so that they can get their lives back on track and achieve a sustained change. The national Troubled Families programme supports families across the country, and not only those that live in inner-city areas. Locally, the Troubled Families programme, which is known as Families First in Herefordshire, has supported over 2,400 families with a broad range of problems including poor school attendance, youth crime, antisocial behaviour, unemployment, domestic violence and physical or mental health needs.*

PQ 2	Dr Stevens, Hereford	Would the council agree that good management of the Children's Centre service can just as easily be maintained through modern contract management, working in partnership with an acclaimed and validated provider like the HOPE Centre, as through an in-house service?	Cabinet Member Children and Families
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**Response:**

Externally provided services are overseen by good contract management arrangements, with good partnership working between the Council and the Provider being a key element. The current arrangements, whereby children's centre services are managed and delivered across most of the county by the

Council and by an external provider in only the Bromyard area, mean that there is some duplication of overhead costs that the in-house service would be able to absorb.

PQ 3	Ms Tait, Bromyard	Would the Council agree that without full costings for the proposed new centralized delivery of Children's Centre services in the Bromyard Area, it is difficult to evaluate if this will be a saving?	Cabinet Member Children and Families
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**Response:**  
The proposed changes aren't intended to achieve a cost saving, but are expected to achieve additional efficiencies. For the same price of the contract, the council will be able to deliver more direct work to vulnerable families than has been provided. The council will be able to provide added value by absorbing the overheads, such as accommodation, administration and management alongside the services that are delivered in other parts of the county and without the need for any additional budget.

Integrating the £25,000 resource into the council service will provide a full-time post that will deliver at least 20 hours of direct work to families per week, increasing from the 11 hours required by the contract and the average 17.5 hours that have been provided. The operational team can also provide further direct work through its early help information and signposting officers and community connectors.

eg

**Supplementary Question:**  
If changes are made to the delivery of Children's Services for Bromyard and its Reach area, there will need to be assurances that this service will be available to serve local families for the 20 hours of direct work with families per week as stated, rather than the hours be taken up by staff travelling from a remote base. Notwithstanding the pandemic, which has necessitated virtual working, there is still going to be a need for close and face to face working with families. Is the Council able to provide this assurance?

The pandemic has exposed the stark inequalities in our society and the community needs to be reassured that these will not be further widened by this proposed change.

**Response from Cabinet Member Children and Families:**  
The Council had continued to work with families which included virtual meetings. The service would not be remote but staff would be locally- focused and flexible. Detail in response to the question would be provided in writing following the meeting.

**Response from Head of Service, Early Help:**  
There had been no reduction in direct work with families. The key work of early help was to undertake work with families in their family home and realise change in behaviour. During the pandemic switched to mainly virtual working and children's centre services have done that through video calls, produced instructional videos for families online, Some face to face work was still being undertaken in family homes in accordance with guidance including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE); 38 face to face visits had taken place at the start of the lockdown.

Written response provided – 12 March:

*The proposals seek to further reduce any inequalities by ensuring that the emerging needs of a child or family that requires early help are identified, assessed and met so that they can evidence sustained change. Children Centre services complete the majority of their work with families on a one to one basis or small groups. This is in the family home or a community venue. This would continue to be the delivery model in Bromyard. During the pandemic there has been a requirement to reassess whether face to face work can continue depending on the national or tiered restrictions. Where in-person contact is necessary, support workers follow the appropriate guidance in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Direct support to families can be delivered virtually (e.g. WhatsApp video or by phone), and physically with workers dropping off resources and food parcels to families and working with them in outdoor space when appropriate. Bromyard casework would be completed by an identified Early Years Support Worker with support from colleagues as required e.g. to cover annual leave.*

PQ 4	Ms Falconer, Hereford	Given the state of deprivation in Herefordshire in general, exacerbated by the pandemic, would the Council agree that the excellent service provided by HOPE to the Bromyard community for excellent value for money is something that the Council might learn from, rather than subtract its commitment to?
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Cabinet Member Children and Families

**Response:**

The Council continues to acknowledge the wider value that the Hope Centre provides to the local community, and the high regard with which local people have for it. The Council is committed to continuing to work in partnership with the Hope Centre and other local services, as we do in all parts of the County and we will also continue to learn from the best practice developed in other areas.

The proposed changes relate to the provision of a contracted service. As a fixed-term contract, there has been no commitment given or implied that funding would continue into the future. It is intended that the proposed changes will increase the capacity for direct work with vulnerable families in response to an Early Help Assessment (EHA), and that such work can be provided wherever it emerges across the county including in those areas that may be more deprived.

The countywide EHA approach has successfully delivered sustainable change for many vulnerable families as part of the National Troubled Families Programme. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Herefordshire has achieved second and first quartile rankings compared to nationwide local authorities in achieving positive outcomes for vulnerable families and is the second highest performing area in the West Midlands.

In line with the national troubled families programme, where sustainable change is achieved for families (through EHA interventions) it is possible to draw-down funding under payment by results arrangements. Since October 2018, 135 successful claims have been made for families solely or partially supported by Children's Centre Services, of which 39 have been achieved during the coronavirus pandemic (since April 2020). None of these claims were for families supported in the Bromyard Reach area.

**Supplementary Question:**

You say Herefordshire has made 135 successful claims under the national troubled families programme, none of which were for the Bromyard reach area. I find this disingenuous. Given that Bromyard, and Bromyard Central in particular, is one of the most deprived areas in the whole country, it is not for lack of need that the Council has made no claims here. Is it worth considering that a) HOPE's holistic interventions with Bromyard's most vulnerable families is related to the fact that the Council has not made applications and/or b) that this measure does not relate to the need and deprivation on the ground, but to whether families fit the relevant eligibility criteria? Moreover, you do not address whether the Council might have something to learn from the HOPE approach to the whole family.



Clearly these Council contracts are for fixed terms and no provider should rely on them indefinitely. However, what is also clear is that the Council proposes to end a contract with a very successful model, at a couple of months' notice, leaving those who rely on HOPE's services with NO idea of what the alternative is to be in a few week's time, during the middle of a pandemic when the need is critical.

**Response from Cabinet Member Children and Families:**

The council was open to learning from HOPE and anywhere good practice was demonstrated. The relationship with HOPE was valuable and the council would seek to sustain a relationship with the organisation. The end date of the contract had been widely known and it was clear what the alternative would be. This may not have been what HOPE would like and it may be something that would be varied but it was broadly known what proposal would be contained in the review. The alternatives had been discussed with HOPE several months previously.

**Response from Head of Service, Early Help:**

The Early Help service works with a wide range of families, these 135 successful claims under the troubled families were just for families with children under 5. The council Early Help Family Support service support families in the Bromyard area and are working closely with three schools: Queen Elizabeth, St Peter's and Bredenbury by identifying an EH FSW to be a link worker who will spend time in the schools, support staff to identify families requiring support and have a caseload of work from the Bromyard area. This is likely to increase the number of families with under 5 year children requiring support as there will be younger siblings.





## **Title of report: Children and Young People Mental Health**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 23 March 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and families**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

To provide an outline summary of the mental health and pastoral care in schools for children, including those who are looked after. The report summarises the current initiatives; and also considers the implications for some of the pupils following the lockdown and what could be done further to support them once restrictions ease. The report will also attempt to summarise the pathway of support as these children grow.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The committee reviews the report and the presentation and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to improve the mental health pathway and pastoral care.**

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions 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 true extent of the mental health issues facing all children as a result of lockdown's is currently unknown; a clearer picture will develop over the forthcoming weeks and months when an assessment of the resources and services required to address the issues can be undertaken. A further report will be brought to scrutiny later in the year. Herefordshire council currently has 326 Looked after Children in the County and who mainly (but not exclusively) attend Herefordshire Schools. These children are looked after by the Council (their corporate parent) for a wide variety of different reasons; they are not one coherent group and have a range of needs and circumstances. They simply share one characteristic amongst many they will not necessarily share.
3. The presentation (appendix 1) provides an overview of the support schools offer (pastoral support in its widest sense) and whether there is an adequate mental health pathway for children. The need for such a pathway has been evident for some time but this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. We are expecting, when the latest lockdown is over, that all pupils who return to schools and colleges will show signs of mental health issues.
4. The pastoral support for children is tailored to individual need and varies widely between settings and individuals. A summary of the picture is shown within the presentation.
5. The mental health support pathways are not clear cut, this is partly because there is no set pathway; and partly because we do not yet know what mental health needs will be evident as children return to school in the coming weeks. Early mental health support pathways need to be reviewed and developed further for children Herefordshire.
6. We are also aware that lockdown; for some children has not been a problem and they have flourished working from home; we only have anecdotal evidence of this however and need to capture more secure data.
7. The draft Children and young people mental health transformation plan for the CCG includes plans to review emotional wellbeing and mental health provision for looked after children in Herefordshire to inform commissioning priorities for 2022-2023. There is a concern however, that timescales may result in continued unmet need for at least another year and that disparity in service provision between Herefordshire and Worcestershire where the new model will be implemented between June-October 2021
8. There needs to be greater parity in the mental health support offer between Worcestershire and Herefordshire; this discussion is taking place to ensure that there

is equity across the counties. We need to assess the increased need for children who are looked after with mental health needs following lockdown ending for students.

9. Herefordshire Council needs to focus specifically on some key priorities; which may include assessing the increase in self harm and eating disorders in young children (11-18) and those children for whom the blended model of online working and attendance has worked better than expected. Furthermore, we need to discuss what additional support could be offered to children over 18 and how this can help progress into work and further education.
10. The presentation provides an overview of all of these elements and we welcome the opportunity to have a discussion in respect of how children and young people's scrutiny committee can provide their support to develop the support we provide to children with their mental health and pastoral support needs.
11. At the meeting there will be two further presentation by partners. The Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG will provide a presentation on CYP mental health and the impact of COVID19; the presentation is attached as appendix 2. Healthwatch will provide a presentation on the schools mental health forum and the youth watch; the presentation is attached as appendix 3.

## **Community impact**

12. 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 on actions completed and outcomes achieved.
13. The successful implementation of current initiatives in the provision of the mental health and pastoral care in schools will provide the support that children who are looked after may require and 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.

## **Environmental Impact**

16. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

## **Equality duty**

17. 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.

18. 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. The effective provision of pastoral support and mental health pathways for children and assists us to discharge our duties under the Equality Act.
19. The current initiatives support the council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular, the implementation of these initiatives will improve the outcomes of children and young people, by ensuring their individual needs are assessed and assisting children and young people and their families to access services to meet their needs.

## **Resource implications**

20. 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

## **Legal implications**

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

## **Risk management**

22. The risks associated with the failure to provide mental health and pastoral support means that young children who are or who have been in the care of the Authority are at greater risk of harm, failure to flourish and / or wider disadvantage.

23. The proposed actions will ensure greater coordination across the work of mental health support for children who are or have been looked after by the state and reduce their exposure to mental health problems and wider vulnerability.
24. We recommend that we look to strengthen the pathways and activity already in place to better co-ordinate the initiatives. Regular oversight of the initiatives already being undertaken will allow for a more cost effective and coordinated set of actions and better targeting of support. We recommend a monitoring group to oversee such activity until the impact of the pandemic is better understood and whilst we mitigate against the risks associated with the pandemic.

## **Consultees**

25. None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Presentation – Pastoral Support and mental health pathway for looked after children.

Appendix 2 – Presentation – Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG – CYP Mental Health and Impact of COVID19.

Appendix 3 – Presentation – Healthwatch – Schools Mental Health Forum and Youth Watch.

## **Background papers**

None identified





Pastoral support and  
mental health pathway  
for children

# Introduction

- There are currently 326 children who are looked after.
- Teenagers' mental health under severe pressure as pandemic continues - new research | Mental Health Foundation - [Teenagers' mental health under severe pressure as pandemic continues - new research | Mental Health Foundation](#)
- Mental Health and well being- following the pandemic - all children - an unknown
- The wide range of initiatives – great, but an unknown growing need
- Mental Health and Wellbeing group coordinates the approach locally
- The planned pathway - needs developing?
- The media coverage suggests there is a wide range of mental health needs following the pandemic lockdowns - however it will take time for schools to see and understand this in reality - how long ?
- Specific cohorts of concern - pre school children, Key Stage 1 - social and language delay, Y6 (transition to secondary) and Y7 (new to school and missing substantial time), 12-16 pupils, and Y10-13). The issue is relevant to all ages but these cohorts have particular issues to face.

# Public Health

- What mental well being initiatives are already in place?
- Strong Young Minds and KOOOTH
- PSHE Association membership, free for schools for 2020/22: access to curricular materials and resources to support mental health across all key stages
- Public Health Nursing Service: access to school nurses, face-face or via text messaging and available as a resource for schools and parents
- -C&YP Health & Wellbeing Survey, covering mental health and emotional wellbeing, to be undertaken across the county and across all ages and abilities up to 25yrs from April 2021 (delayed from 2020 due to covid-19)
- Mental health and wellbeing of C&YP key considerations as part of Safeguarding Board priorities on child criminal exploitation and neglect strategy – to be delivered 2021/22
- An immediate short-term focus desirable across all educational settings, including early years, due to covid impact and limited access to face-face services and 'eyes on the child'

# Pathways

- There is a need to develop the mental health pathway for children in care and care leavers in Herefordshire
- The draft children and young people mental health transformation plan for the CCG includes plans to review emotional wellbeing and mental health provision for looked after children in Herefordshire to inform commissioning priorities for 2022/23
- We have a concern that timescales result in continued unmet need for at least another year and that disparity in service provision between Herefordshire and Worcestershire where new model will be implemented between June-October 2021

# Education Psychology Service

- Supporting teachers to meet the mental health and wellbeing of pupils rather than direct individual (face to face) work. We do this largely through training or consultation.
- 
- Early intervention case work: schools request our involvement, we meet the teachers, assess the child's needs (often this may involve assessment of their levels of anxiety, depression, self-esteem etc) and either meet with or provide written recommendations for strategies to help staff understand and support children.  
33 This may include signposting parents and teachers to other services locally (CAMHs, CLD) or nationally (NSPCC, NAS, DSA) etc.
- 
- Emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA'S). This is a national accredited qualification and we provide TA's in school with 5 days training in emotional wellbeing to become the schools 'key emotional literacy case worker'.
- 
- This year to support with going back to school and a recovery curriculum written by DfE/Anna Freud Centre we trained 65 teachers with a nominated mental health responsibility to understand psychological first aid, the strategies to support growth of relationships and whole school approaches to improve wellbeing in the pandemic.

# Education Psychology Service

- Bereavement support is available.
- We are working with other services in additional needs on implementing a more trauma informed approach to behaviour across the authority, this involves understanding childhood adversity and will require working with staff to audit their own behaviour policies and school environment and approach to relationships.

34

# The Virtual School

- The Virtual School offers:
- Free training to all Herefordshire Schools on a range of topics affecting mental health (including trauma and attachment theory, ACEs, Emotion Coaching and Protective Behaviours)
- STEPS workers (mentors) to support children who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties that are impacting on their education
- A range of interventions delivered by educational psychologists to support them to understand and address social, emotional and mental health difficulties (foster carer consultations, school consultations, group problem solve meetings, and video interaction guidance (VIG))
- Opportunities for looked after children and care leavers to meet one another so they do not feel they are alone and 'unique' in their experiences of being looked after
- In the 2019/20 academic year the Virtual School funded 274 mentoring / SEMH interventions in schools using pupil premium funding

# Next Steps

- Discussion and agreed next steps
- Support to further develop the pathway for children who are looked after and recent care leavers.

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# Herefordshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

37

Dr Katie Powell, Clinical Director

Elaine Cook-Tippins, Clinical Services Manager

*elaine.cook-tippins@nhs.net*



- Clinically significant mental health conditions in CYP risen by 50% in last 3 years
- 1 in 6 CYP (5 – 16yrs) will have a probable MH condition
- A **Young Minds Survey** in first lockdown – 83% of respondents indicated that their mental health was a bit worse or much worse
- Pressure on in-patient bed capacity – already a limited resource



# CYP in Crisis

- Nationally seen an increase in demand for T4 beds, GAU, PICU and ED
- Locally, seen increase in use of T4 beds for CYP with ED
- In 2020, 150 CYP seen at WVT A&E/Children's Ward in crisis, of whom 84 needed ongoing CAMHS support post discharge from WVT
- Nov 2020 n = 31 CYP – significantly higher than we would expect (average for 2020 = 12.5/mth)



# National and Local focus – NHS Long Term Plan

## NATIONAL

- 345 000 CYP to be supported by MHSTs
- 0 – 25 offer
- Eating Disorder Investment to maintain waiting times
- 100% coverage of 24/7 crisis care for CYP
- Aligned MH plans for CYP with SEND, LD, ASD etc

## LOCAL

- 1 MHST in Herefordshire – hope for more teams in 22/23
- On table for discussion
- Significant investment confirmed by CCG for 21/22
- 24/7 Urgent MH helpline; review of crisis provision
- CCG Commissioner for SEND; review of ASD pathway; Keyworker Pilot bid



# Herefordshire CAMHS Offer

Eating Disorders

Mental Health Support  
Team in Schools

Kooth

CAMHS Learning  
Disabilities

CAMHS Duty and  
Urgent Care

CAMHS Complex and  
Vulnerable CYP

CAMHS Partnership



# Eating Disorders

- Significant increase in referrals of CYP experiencing eating disorders both nationally and locally (34% increase in 20/21 without including March 2021 data).
- Increase in acuity of eating disorders and late presentation to service
- Local increase in CYP presenting with very poor physical health requiring admission to WVT Children's Ward for stabilisation
- Local increase in CYP requiring admission to Tier 4 adolescent MH hospital due to serious eating disorder

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# Mental Health Support Team in Schools

- National programme to create new, non-traditional CYPMH workforce, delivering 1:1, group and parent interventions following evidence based models of care for CYP with mild to moderate presentations
- Also focusing on the ‘Whole School Approach’
- Supporting teaching staff with their wellbeing
- Year 1 is a training year, delivering interventions into 4 schools
- Year 2 (Nov/Dec 2021) widens the provision
- Chance to bid for more teams later 21/22

43



# KOOTH

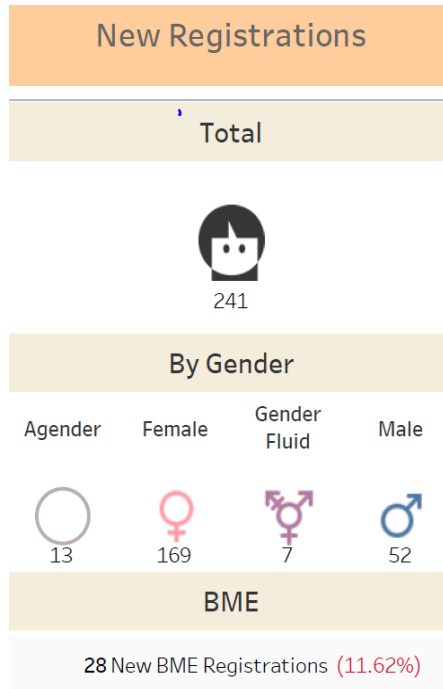
- An online, anonymous wellbeing community, providing forums, articles, text chat and counselling sessions for CYP aged 11-19.
- Contract managed by HWHCT
- Went 'live' in Herefordshire in April 2020 – soft launch due to COVID but lots of support from partners – social media helpful for awareness raising.

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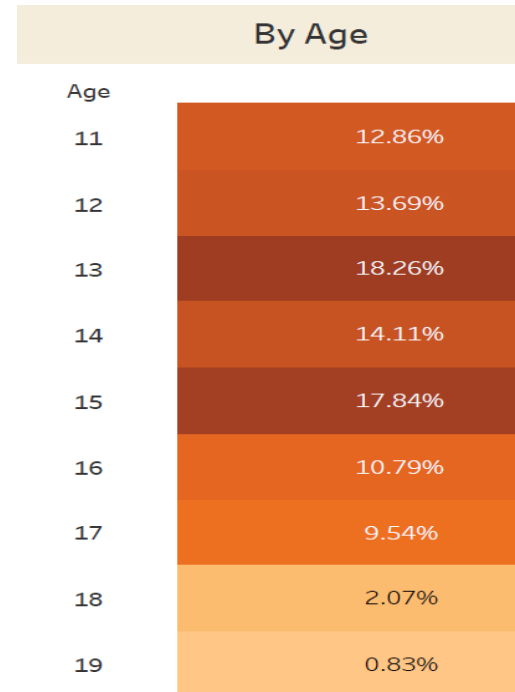


- To end of Q3, 512 CYP had registered with Kooth, logging in 3248 times, with 85% of CYP returning.
- In Q3, 75% of logins were outside of 'office hours'

45



Q3 registrations:  
gender and age





# CAMHS Duty and Urgent Care

- Offer a same day response/assessment for urgent presentations
- Work closely with WVT Children's Ward to assess CYP who have been admitted with self harm/thoughts of self harm
- Assess CYP in A&E to support flow and least restrictive interventions
- Follow CYP up and recommend next steps
- Manage pathway to Tier 4
- Work closely with families to reduce re-attendance in crisis
- Cover 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm weekends and B/H.
- 24/7 urgent MH helpline in place
- National discussions about increasing 24/7 crisis response for CYP

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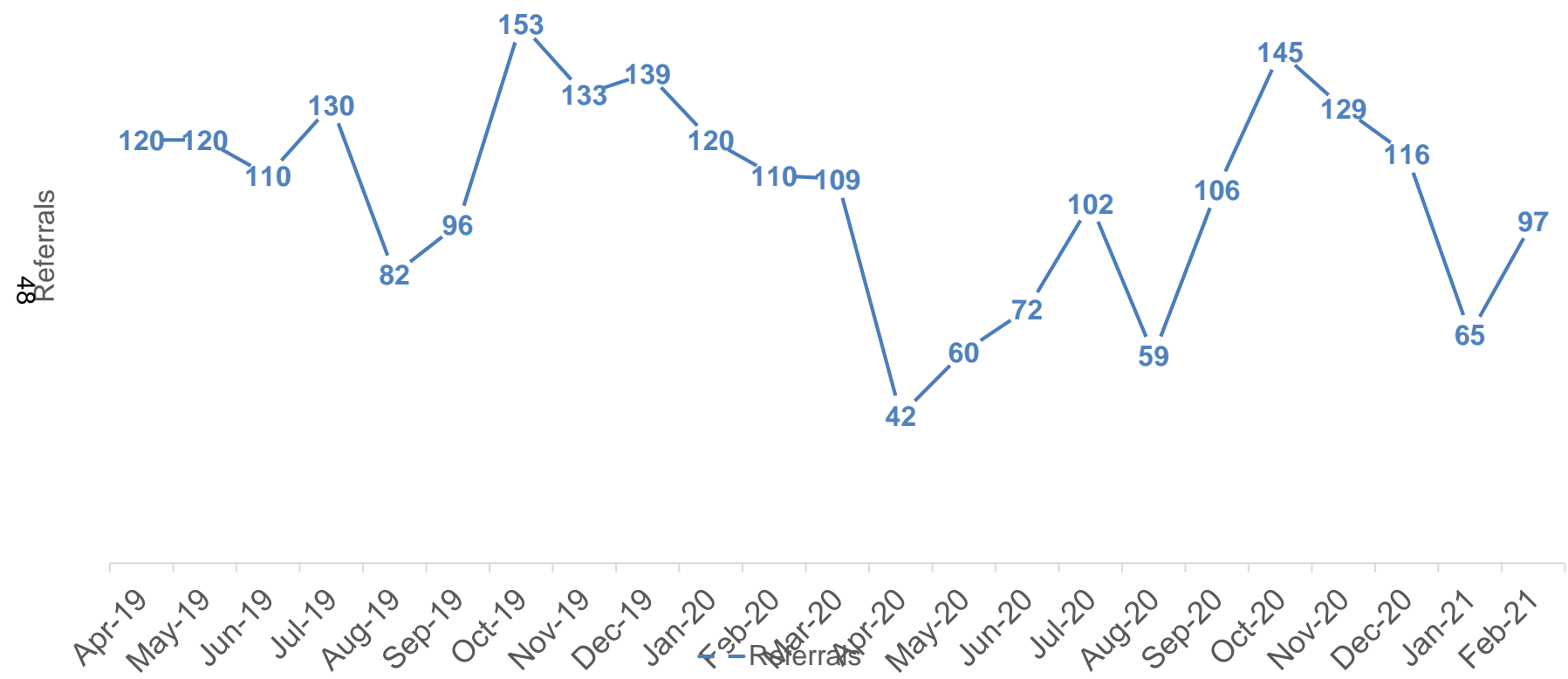


# Activity

- Waiting times – consistently meet our contacted waiting times for routine care (18 weeks for assessment, 26 weeks for treatment), urgent care and Eating Disorders (7 days for urgent treatment, 28 days for routine treatment – 1 breach)
- Access rates – above national expectation
- Increase in clinical contacts due to digital sessions – nationally and locally CAMHS services are highest users of digital technology



# REFERRALS TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE CAMHS SERVICE





# Referrals during COVID

- Most referrals to Herefordshire CAMHS from GP or schools, so changes in their delivery directly affects our referral activity.
- Significant dip April 2020 (65% less than April 2019), and again in January 2021 (45% less than Jan 2020), coinciding with national lockdowns. Mirrored national trends.
- Prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown referrals almost fully recovered.
- Expected will exceed previous years activity from March onwards.



# CAMHS delivery during COVID

- Moved to HWHCT on 1<sup>st</sup> April – so contending with a new organisation and COVID at the same time!
- 1<sup>st</sup> wave; some staff were redeployed to support the set up of the 24/7 Urgent MH helpline
- Very swift reorganisation of ways of working; entire caseload reviewed and re-prioritised
- Move to delivery of assessment and therapy online where clinically appropriate – *maintaining this mode of delivery for families who it suits better (travel/time/access)*
- CYP referred urgently were seen face to face throughout
- CYP referred with concern about Eating Disorders were seen face to face throughout
- Physical health monitoring continued
- Changed working patterns to provide broader coverage (8am-8pm)

50



# CAMHS delivery during COVID

## cont...

- Worked closely with partners to ensure vulnerable CYP were visible
- Increased multidisciplinary meetings internally to ensure good quality handovers/awareness in case of staff need to isolate
- Reduced number of staff in buildings; easy access to PPE
- Increased access to advice via Duty team covering 8am-8pm
- Staff 'check-ins' and focus on wellbeing
- NVR (Non Violent Resistance) interventions increased virtually to support families



# New developments

- NVR as a model to provide support to families
- Consultation model to support the network around Children who have Care Experiences
- Significant investment into Eating Disorders service
- Medication discontinuation/reduction for CYP (where indicated) who are on a number of different types of drug
- Bid for more MHSTs in Autumn 2021



# THE CLD TRUST 20/21

In March 2020 The CLD Trust quickly brought forward plans to offer face to face therapy via secure video conferencing. This was made available in May '20 and is now available for any young person who wishes to use it.

In May face to face service resumed with Covid Safety measures in place and the service has remained open throughout subsequent lockdowns.

The majority of young people chose to wait to see their therapist in person.

Referrals in 21/21 have been slightly lower 1,230 received up to the 5th May. This may be due to the fact that young people have been unable to see their GP.

273 young people self-referred through Strong Young Minds.

Additional presentations have been noticed in young people's self-referrals this year with young people describing Trauma, feeling violent, social isolation, bereavement, sleep difficulties. Nightmares, PTSD and hearing voices in addition to presentations normally seen in service.

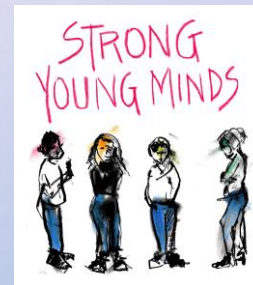
86% of young people self-referring described their problems as *"a big issue for me"*.

One quote from a young person *"I feel that my life is ending before its got going. My plans have to change but I don't know how to do it. I'm worrying constantly and everything is closing in on me. I'm spending more time alone and I can't control my thoughts. My mum and dad are totally stressed with everything"*



Strong Young Minds Champions have launched an Express Yourself Art Exhibition which is taking place in Hereford this week and next.

Herefordshire Wellbeing Ambassadors are working on a project looking at young people's experiences as they transition from CAMHS services.





# healthwatch

Herefordshire

Children's Scrutiny Committee  
23rd March 2021

Christine Price - Chief Officer  
✉ [christine@healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk](mailto:christine@healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk)



May 2018, the public voted Young People's Mental Health as one of the top three priorities for Healthwatch

## Engagement

We engaged with 3898 young people through a variety of engagement methods in order to reach as many people as possible such as:

- Crucial Crew
- Scout Shire Jam
- Surveys and focus groups in schools and colleges
- Surveys and focus groups with other youth organisations
- County school games, our school's forum
- Youth council conference

## Topics discussed

- Support & services available within the school setting
- Length of treatment plans and how young people feel about this across different agencies delivering services
- The most helpful non statutory services
- The use of technology to support young people's mental health
- The point that young people start experiencing poor mental health
- What encourages young people to take the first step and seek help for their mental health

## The following themes emerged:

1. Schools are already undertaking numerous initiatives to support young people's mental health but would like to be able to do more. This highlighted a need for a platform to share good practice, tips and resources and possibly work towards a common approach.
2. Young people with mental health issues may not be taking advantage of what 'outside of school' statutory and community organisations can do to support them. This suggests that more communication and promotion is needed between them and schools, children and young people.
3. Bullying was consistently highlighted as a cause of many mental health concerns.
4. The location and environment where young people receive treatment, care and support has an impact on their wellbeing and their ability to recover. This needs to be factored into delivery of services.
5. Some key digital technology and apps were identified that young people use to support their mental health, which can be shared with others to help more people.
6. Insight into the ages that young people start to experience mental health issues, what or who encouraged them to take the first step to get help and where they went for help.

## Recommendations

Based on this feedback and the themes we have identified the following recommendations:

1. Develop a “Youthwatch” initiative to make future engagement with young people more effective and to support the development of peer-based support models.
2. Continue research to explore some of the themes and issues identified through Youthwatch and the school’s forum and working with other organisations
3. Continue our school’s mental health forum to assist and improve system wide communication and interworking. We may need to seek additional financial support to continue this initiative indefinitely.
4. Progress work on findings 2-6 with other agencies through the children and young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health partnership group.

Established in May 2019

**Aim 1:** A termly forum for professionals in the education sector and other youth organisations to network, gain professional development, training and information to help them in their roles of supporting children and young people's mental health.

**Aim 2:** For Healthwatch to hear more about children and young people's mental health in the county and increase the voice and involvement of young people in the work of Healthwatch and Youthwatch.

**Aim 3:** Involve people in shaping the design and delivery of services in the county



healthwatch  
Herefordshire  
Schools Forum



- 5 forums so far
- 235 attendees collectively
- 13 newsletters, resources and reading lists
- Mailing list of 212 people
- The involvement of primary and secondary schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations
- Young people from Hope Support and Strong Young Minds have attended these forums

## Topics

- CLD Trust - tier 2 counselling and youth participation services in Herefordshire
- H&W Health and Care NHS Trust and the new NHS school's mental health service in Herefordshire
- Place2be - models for a whole school approach to mental health
- Workshop on what mental health community support is available in the county
- CAMHS understanding and working with self harm
- A practical approach to building resilience in children and young people for schools
- Gathering views to shape the NHS Long Term Plan around children's mental health



Established in May 2019

## Secondary school work: John Masefield Students/Strong Young Minds Champions

Joined in the school's mental health forum on the topic of building resilience, alongside professionals, to give their perspective.

Created videos with Dr Pooky Knightsmith and Healthwatch about:

- Children's mental health in school
- What schools can do to help young people
- What young people want from the NHS for the NHS Long Term Plan children's mental health agenda





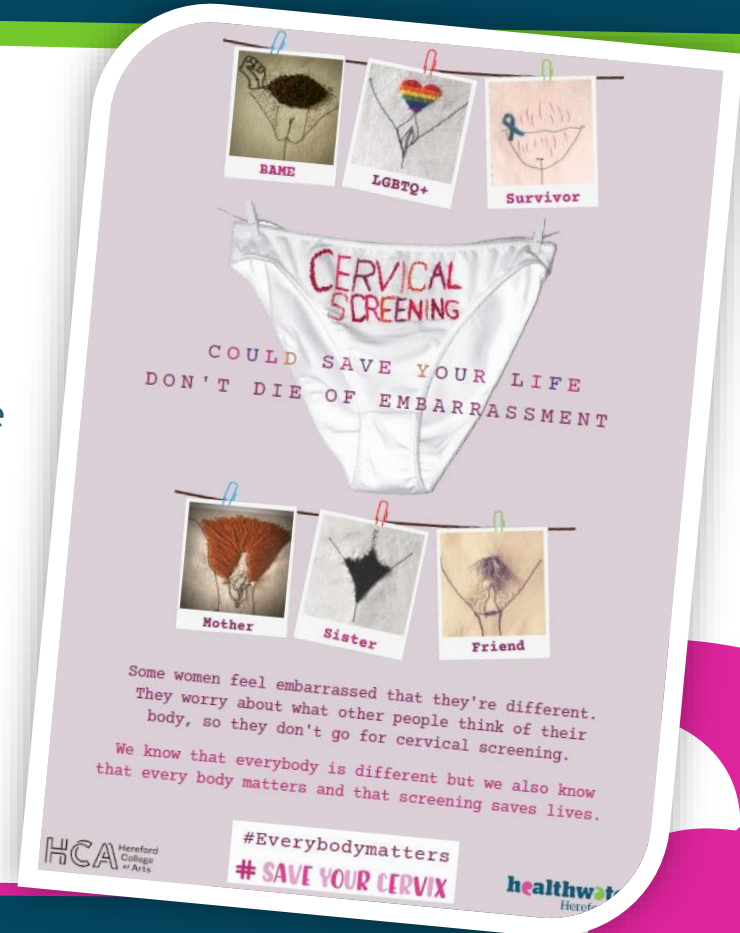
## Hereford College of Arts Healthwatch Cervical Screening Campaign

Healthwatch worked with a local GP and cancer lead and the college to design a live brief for degree and foundation year students to work on as part of their course.

The brief was to create campaign materials which would increase the numbers of women attending a cervical screening test from the following demographic groups, where there is a lower uptake:

- Lesbian and bisexual women
- Women Age 25-35
- Women from BAME communities

30 students took part and exhibited their work in January. The two finalists, Debbie and Charlotte, have since worked together on the campaign which will launch later this month.





## Video Links

### School forum Videos (click for link):

[\(34\) YOUTH VOICE | How should mental health spending be invested? - YouTube](#)

[\(34\) YOUTH ENGAGEMENT | The benefits and ideas for making it work - YouTube](#)

[\(34\) YOUTH VOICE | how can schools support young people's mental health? - YouTube](#)

## Youthwatch

[About youthwatch](#)

[Ask the Doctor Part 1 - Mental health](#)

[Ask the Doctor Part 2 - GP Surgeries](#)

[Ask the Doctor Part 3 - Body image and changes](#)

[Design a mascot](#)

[Healthwatch News - what is Healthwatch](#)





## **Title of report: Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 For Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SEND**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 23 March 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and families;**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision.

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

To review and to seek the views of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee on the approach and content of the attached (appendix 1) 'Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 for specialist settings educating children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)'; and for the committee to determine any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The committee reviews the strategy and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure sufficient high quality education places for children with special educational needs.**



## **Alternative options**

1. It is a function of the committee to review and scrutinise the strategic direction of the Children and Families directorate. The committee also has the function to make recommendations on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised, and to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive. As such, there are no alternative options

## **Key considerations**

2. In 2016, Herefordshire Schools Capital Strategy was adopted by the executive; this strategy describes an approach to and principles for bringing forward proposals for capital improvements to Herefordshire maintained schools, in a rational and evidence based way. It encompasses the likely need for improvements in capacity (numbers of pupil places available), suitability of accommodation, and/or the condition/safety of the accommodation provided by the county maintained schools; Herefordshire Council has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient high quality accommodation for pupils with an Education Health Care plan (EHCP) for their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In order to ensure that sufficient places are available in safe and suitable accommodation to cater for the full range of needs identified within EHCPs.
3. The 'Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 for specialist settings educating children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)' (hereafter referred to as 'the strategy') is proposed to complement the overarching Herefordshire Schools Capital Strategy, by specifically addressing the range of specialist settings necessary to accommodate the education needs of Herefordshire children and young people with an EHCP for SEND.
4. The strategy seeks to ensure that there is high quality sustainable specialist educational accommodation for children and young people (CYP) with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) for SEND in Herefordshire.
5. By adopting the strategic approach and investment proposals over the lifecycle of the strategy Herefordshire Council will undertake a planned and prioritised sequence of improvement works that continue to ensure that the statutory responsibility to provide sufficient high quality education places for children and young people with SEND in particular those with an EHCP relating to their SEN or Disability is met.
6. The SEND specific strategy states the intention to ensure that: all Herefordshire children and young people with education, health and care plans for SEND are educated in high quality, fit for purpose learning environments; that sufficient capacity is available to commission such places in settings that meet need within Herefordshire where possible; and that a strategic approach to capital improvement projects in SEND specialist settings is established to ensure clear prioritisation and best value investment.
7. The strategy includes information about Herefordshire specialist SEND settings and the provision that they offer for our SEND pupil population (for detail see the full strategy, appendix 1). It describes the information gathered about the SEND pupil population, for example the forecasting of future pupil numbers for the short and mid-term, and the trends in the SEND special school population both in Herefordshire, and nationally,



(including our statistically neighbouring local authorities). With regard to the SEND specialist setting accommodation, a range of information is routinely collected, added to, revised and analysed, that supports the forecasting of basic need for places (sufficiency considerations), and also the condition and suitability needs of current accommodation. This information is used to enable the prioritisation of potential investment needs, and also supports the subsequent formulation of detailed and considered business cases to enable recommendations to be brought to governance.

8. The quality of education accommodation is important for all children and young people, but vitally so for CYP with SEND, so that equality of opportunity for those pupils may be guaranteed, their personal potential realised, and their achievement and development across all areas maximised. It is of paramount importance that the facilities used by some of our most vulnerable children and young people supports their successful transition into adulthood, and offers them the broad and balanced curriculum that should be available to all pupils. Investment in high quality buildings for this purpose is essential, and will support school leaders and staff to continue and add to the excellent work that they already do, in bringing about inspirational education for their SEND school communities.
9. The measurement of success will be evidenced by Herefordshire Council investment in providing buildings that comply with the nationally recognised DfE guidance, setting out the accommodation that our SEND pupils should expect, and deserve. (DfE Building Bulletin 104) An additional measure of success will be the creation of new or improved educational facilities that allow and encourage the delivery of an appropriate and innovative curriculum offer for all SEND pupils.
10. The proposals within the strategy include a range of recommended projects that would benefit children across the full range of SEND requiring specialist educational settings, equating to improvements for approximately 1.4% of the total number of school age children in Herefordshire. Children for whom learning is difficult, and barriers to learning significant. Numbers of children and young people for whom specialist educational settings is needed is increasing year on year, in Herefordshire, in similar local authorities to Herefordshire, and nationally.
11. The strategy has already been communicated in draft form for consultation to all appropriate stakeholders. This includes school leaders (of all schools, not just specialist settings), parents and carers of children and young people with an education, health and care plan for the scrutiny of themselves and their child, members of the SEND strategy group (representative of professionals supporting the full range of SEND), and, through schools, disseminated to any other stakeholders thought appropriate by school leaders for their response. If the strategy is agreed, the same groups would be informed through corporate communications mechanisms, and the strategy placed on the website for full public access. Progress against the strategy intentions and recommendations would be regularly reported through the normal school channels, for example the regular 'Schools Spotlight' publication.
12. In order to formulate capital proposals, the capital team collects a range of information. A schools capacity return for the government (SCAP) is produced for Herefordshire school age children each year. This SCAP report also provides a forecast of likely numbers of children attending schools for future years. Using this it is possible to forecast numbers we may need to accommodate in SEND specialist schools in the

future. This information is also compared with numbers nationally, and numbers within local authorities similar to Herefordshire. The capital team also tracks and records information about each Herefordshire maintained school's accommodation. This information includes suitability (for SEND settings this is measured against the recommendations of government building bulletin 104), condition (most recently surveyed in 2020) and safety (also examined during the condition surveys of 2020, and supplemented by fire safety checks commissioned by individual schools).

13. The information above enables a mechanism for prioritising investment need. Each SEND specialist setting educates CYP with a range of needs. This is explained in the attached strategy – appendix 1. There is an annual review of the education health and care plan (EHCP) for each child to ensure that need is still being met. When children and young people are nearing the time for an education phase transfer (for example from primary to secondary education) parents, carers and pupils are supported to consider where their next placement might be. In order to ensure that high quality places are available the local authority has a responsibility to work towards this by supporting not just educational quality, but also education accommodation in its maintained school settings.
14. As well as significant investment by the council in schools capital improvement over the past five years (for example the work underway to remodel and add to provision at Brookfield Special School, using a council contribution of over £2m) occasionally opportunities arise to apply for government grant funding for school capital improvements. For example the recent special provision grant, supporting the Brookfield School capital project, and the successful bid by Herefordshire Council to receive a new SEND post-16 College. The bid for a 16-19 phase special school in 2017 was discussed with head teachers from all Herefordshire special schools at the time and agreed as appropriate. The bid requested a new school that would give improved accommodation for the current number of post 16 students, also add 20 new places, to increase capacity for the future. The college opens in September 2021 and will accommodate 60+ 16-19 age students with learning disabilities from Herefordshire. We have also received expressions of interest in placements there from neighbouring local authorities.
15. The proposals within the strategy include a proposal to significantly invest in improvements to a special school in Leominster, providing an increase in places for SEND pupils from 2-16. We recommend that consultation on closure of the current sixth form at the school is undertaken during 2021. The school presently offers education from age 2 to 19. Numbers within the sixth form have fluctuated over the years since opening, but have never risen above 12 students. When the new SEND sixth form college opens in Hereford City this year, it is likely that the numbers of students attending the sixth form in Leominster will decrease. The new college will have sufficient spaces for all Herefordshire 16-19 pupils anticipated to need a place. In any one school year post – 16 we may accommodate 1-3 students from neighbouring local authorities (LAs), these numbers have also been considered, and discussion with our neighbouring LAs is underway. The special school in Leominster provides a good standard of education for its pupils, however the school accommodation capacity, condition and suitability are all substandard. In addition, a recent fire risk assessment has recorded that all three of the buildings on site have outlived their suitability and that they are unfit for the purpose for which they are being used.

16. The Children and Families Directorate capital team has considered the impact of possible closure of this facility and concluded that although the school has provided good education for this age group, the numbers of children attending in the future may make the viability of the sixth form increasingly difficult, thus putting mounting pressure on the whole school budget. In addition, children and young people at and over the age of 16 with SEND are more likely to be able to travel to school in Hereford City than younger pupils, as they benefit from effective travel training at their school to help prepare for increasing independence in adulthood. The proposal does not seek to underestimate the difficulties and barriers experienced by pupils with SEND who have to travel for lengthy periods to attend school, but in a transport modelling exercise it was found that if transport routes are revised and improved, travel from north of the county to the new college in Hereford may not mean significantly increased travel times, as its location benefits from being central within the county, with a network of roads leading in from peripheral areas. Children and young people aged 16+ already travel to the SEND sixth form provision at the Barrs Court Hub in Hereford city from the eastern, western and southern perimeters of the county. The proposed travel time for students travelling from the northern perimeter in the future would be equitable with, and little different from the travel for their post 16 peers who live elsewhere in the county.
17. Sixth form students currently educated at the Leominster school benefit from a rich range of off-site learning opportunities within their own neighbourhood. The leadership of the new college has pledged that these opportunities will continue to exist, and be built upon within the personalised curriculum for all students at the new college. In addition, for those students who are able, and wish to, there will be opportunities for joint learning experiences at the other post 16 settings in Hereford City.
18. Quite understandably, school leaders, staff and some parents, carers and pupils would be saddened by a proposal to consult on closure of their sixth form phase. For this reason, the strategy proposal is that full consultation on this recommendation should take place, following the DfE government guidance on how to consult on significant changes to maintained schools, so that all relevant information can be considered and an appropriate council decision on this matter be taken.

## **Community impact**

19. The projects recommended within the strategy will help Herefordshire Council to achieve some of their stated intentions in the County Plan 2020-24. In particular that it will: invest in low carbon projects to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030; it will ensure that all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve; it will protect the lives of vulnerable people; and invest in education and skills.
20. In addition to considering the impact on children and young people with SEND of proposed projects it will be important to bear in mind when considering a capital project scope, scale and budget, the needs of the Herefordshire community as a whole, best use of any financial investment, and how many pupils that investment will benefit.
21. Further investigation into any positive or negative implications of the proposal in the strategy relating to the special school in Leominster will be conducted through the proposed consultation on closure of the sixth form described in paragraph 13 above.

## **Environmental Impact**

22. The SEND capital strategy contains a number of recommendations that would result in capital projects being prioritised and brought forward through the usual corporate project management and governance routes. As is expected by Herefordshire Council, projects would be conceived, specified and implemented to comply with all environmental expectations in council policy and principles, including Passivhaus excellent accreditation.
23. The environmental impact of any proposals within the strategy will be considered and expectations articulated to contractors and delivery partners that would minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be ensured through appropriate procurement mechanisms and managed and reported through the usual contract management routines.
24. The development of each project will therefore seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.
25. The proposal to consult on closure of a sixth form facility at the Leominster special school, and commission places instead at the new college opening in September 2021 may slightly increase transport times for a small number of young people from the north of Herefordshire, but not above times and distances already being travelled by post 16 students from the south, east and west of the county. In addition a very small number of students travel from out of county into Herefordshire to school, but these routes both to Leominster, and to Hereford City are already established. To improve this for all post 16 students travelling in to Hereford to attend the new college, it is proposed that the transport routes, which have developed over time and are not always efficient, be reviewed, in order to streamline travel. Aiming to benefit students and minimise impact on the environment. Each project developed will also require the school leader and project contractor to consult with Herefordshire planning department on highways and transport implications of the proposed development, and produce a detailed travel plan showing how travel and transport will be successfully managed, encouraging sustainable travel choices for pupils and staff that have the least possible impact on learners and the environment.

## **Equality duty**

26. 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.

27. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our procured providers for each project proposed will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation, and the requirement by Herefordshire Council, that all projects ensure council compliance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 as above.

28. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes. A proposal within the strategy that recommends a consultation on the closure of a small sixth form provision in Leominster does constitute a service change. However this does not discriminate against those young people in the Leominster area for whom traditionally this sixth form setting would have been available, as a new college opening in 2021 will offer equally good opportunities, in new modern and compliant school buildings, led and managed by an academy trust with a proven track record of providing outstanding education. In addition, education placements at this setting will ensure equality of access to sixth form education for the Leominster community of young people with SEND with their peers from other parts of the county, who will also be travelling to the new college for post 16 education.

29. Consultation to seek the views of relevant stakeholders on the draft strategy has already taken place. See appendix 2 for a summary of responses. If the strategy as a whole is agreed, further and wider consultation would then be conducted with regard to the specific recommendation regarding the Leominster school sixth form proposed closure. This will enable a full and detailed examination of the proposal, its likely impact and the reasons for the recommendation, and will provide all of the detail needed for the council to deliberate on its final decision regarding this proposal.

## **Resource implications**

30. The implications of the capital strategy for resources are varied. The strategy approach will require ongoing work by officers within the Children and Families Directorate in bringing improvement concepts in priority order to a feasibility proposal stage at appropriate times during the lifecycle of the strategy. As each concept is proposed and brought forward for investigation into its feasibility, funding for this activity will need to be secured from the Capital Development Fund. If suitable expertise and capacity is apparent within the council, some activities may be completed internally, where this is not possible, procurement of services will be embarked upon, following internal guidance and protocols. Following the feasibility exercise, if a business case is put forward for consideration, there is an implication for a capital funding request in each case.

31. The first priority identified within the strategy, is a project to significantly improve the accommodation for a special school in Leominster. Funding is already in place for the feasibility study that will identify the best solution and the high level costs that this would incur. Contractors deliver this feasibility work over the next 2-3 months resulting in a report produced which will inform a project business case to be brought forward before the end of Summer 2021, detailing the proposed scale, scope and cost of the project, and outlining a case for council capital funding to be granted to implement the project.
32. Each proposed project will then be tackled within a timescale that is staged through the strategy lifecycle. Projects recommended in the strategy range from minor remodelling/redevelopment works at some settings, through medium scale improvements at some, to the aforementioned full scale project proposal that would require significant funding at the Leominster special school.
33. In each case, investigation into alternative or contributory funding will be undertaken, including contribution from the school setting itself, benefactor funding, equity release, developer contributions and government grant opportunities. The existence of a coherent council capital improvement approach to SEND settings will be vital in order to strengthen the likelihood of an application for any available government funding being considered and accepted.
34. In addition, financial benefits to be gained through proposed projects will be examined, including through sustainable energy options to reduce impact on school revenue spending for example, and maintenance cost avoidance implications for both council and schools by the provision of new and effective accommodation, replacing old, poor and expensive accommodation.
35. Completed appropriate cost and funding tables will be included as required in each business case brought forward, on agreement of the strategy approach and proposals.

## **Legal implications**

36. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community.
37. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area.
38. Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on the Local Authority to support children and young people in England with special educational needs or disabilities and to keep under review the educational provision in its area for those children and young people.
39. The best value duty is contained in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a result of which the Council is under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant guidance states that Councils should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision.

## **Risk management**

40. Adoption of the strategy will demonstrate a council commitment to a programme of capital investment works to settings educating children and young people with an EHCP for SEND. This brings forward a risk of currently unplanned for council expenditure. However, this financial risk is mitigated by the governance regulations that exist within capital project management procedures, meaning that each project would be brought forward for governance consideration at the appropriate stages, with decision making entirely within the control of council members, before any projects receive agreement or funding is granted.
41. If and when a project is agreed, and funding applied for and granted, budget control will be tightly managed through the corporate project management process, and appropriate sign off required for spending decisions within the project. Key risks are routinely highlighted in this process, and mitigation identified that reduces impact of pressures on the council overall position.
42. The legal risks that any project might encounter are equally, managed by stringent compliance with corporate policies and procedures. There is legal officer support on each project board, and legal scrutiny of all recommendations put forward for council deliberation.
43. By constructing a strategy outlining approaches to capital investment in SEND settings, including explanation as to how projects are prioritised and brought forward for implementation, the council is reducing reputational risk by offering transparent information regarding the reasons for proposed investment and the mechanisms for choosing when and why the investment should be made. In addition appropriate consultation processes used in advance of decisions on any significant changes ensure open, honest and informed debate prior to any final decision.
44. Perceived broad categories of risk, and opportunities apparent, see below.

Risk / opportunity of agreeing the strategy	Mitigation
<p>There is risk of a council financial investment requirement for each project recommended that will improve the lives and achievements of vulnerable children and young people with SEND, and also support the council commitment to sustainability and environmental improvement. Although there would be an initial financial outlay, there are significant future cost benefits apparent through the creation of modern low carbon emission buildings, reduced revenue costs and maintenance cost avoidance for the council and schools</p>	<p>Each project will be individually costed by feasibility work before council decision to progress. The feasibility report would include possible other contributions to the cost that may be available.</p> <p>Consideration would be given as to how many children and young people would benefit from the proposed improvement, so that best value use of public funding may be demonstrated</p>
<p>If a project is granted and a budget allocated, there is a risk of overspend.</p>	<p>This risk would be minimised by a high level cost estimate from the feasibility study, and then by in project implementation, stringent adherence to council project management procedures.</p>
<p>Within any proposed capital project there are legal risks.</p>	<p>Legal risks would be managed through constitution of the project board at an early stage, which requires a legal case officer, who advises on legal issues and required approaches at each stage</p>
<p>When a capital proposal is brought forward that involves council investment there is a risk of reputational damage</p>	<p>Reputational risk to the council will be mitigated by full compliance with all corporate procedures, appropriate consultation and provision of relevant information about how spending has been prioritised and the value that each investment brings.</p>



Risks/opportunities of not agreeing the strategy	Mitigation
<p>If the strategy is not agreed, in its current or any amended form, there is risk of unplanned and reactive spending being necessary to deal with substandard and or dangerous accommodation for SEND pupils. There is an additional risk of being unable to place children with an EHCP for SEND in a suitable Herefordshire school, thus incurring risk of significantly increased transport time and cost for placements in private settings, putting the budget for all SEND education at risk.</p>	<p>An alternative to the strategy approach would be needed, or a council decision to increase funding to the high needs block enabling increased spending on out of county placements for CYP with SEND</p>
<p>If a council strategy for planned improvement to SEND specialist settings is not in place, there is the risk of placing pupils in accommodation that is unsafe, and cannot meet need</p>	<p>In order to reduce the risk of injury or harm through unsafe buildings, if the strategy is not accepted, it would be necessary to set aside a significant capital fund that could be drawn on to respond to emergency accommodation safety concerns</p>
<p>If capital improvement to accommodation for SEND pupils is reactive not planned, there is the risk of reputational damage as investment methodology would not be evident and may be seen to result in unfair or poor value spending decisions.</p>	<p>In the absence of a published strategy for SEND specialist settings capital investment and improvement, the council would need to be prepared to justify each investment decision individually, when bringing forward previously unidentified proposals</p>

## Consultees

45. During the development of the strategy there has been a range of consultation activity. Initially some strategy suggestions were put forward to head teachers of special schools, when it became evident to the SEND commissioning team that demand for places in specialist settings was increasing (2016/2017). This led to the application for a new government funded 16-19 college in 2017, which was successful. Following this, investigation into the trend of increased pressure on places across all age ranges in the county also prompted further examination of the national picture and the situation within our statistically neighbouring authorities, carried out by officers within the capital strategy team and Head of Additional Needs. Concerns as to this trend and the need to respond were raised at a Directorate level, and shared with the Director, Assistant Director and member for education. A draft strategy was formulated that included consideration of the current capacity deficiencies, and also suitability and condition of accommodation in current settings. This draft was shared with the council members for assets, education and finance.
46. A sequence of further consultation, leading to refining and shaping of the final strategy was conducted, leading to the recent stakeholder consultation which closed on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021. For more information on consultation, please see appendix 2.

47. Political group consultation will be sought in advance of the final decision.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** draft 'Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 for Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)'

**Appendix 2** summary of consultation timeline and responses to the recent consultation on the draft 'Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 for Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)'

## **Background papers**

None

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

### **Glossary of terms**

**SEND – special educational needs and disabilities**

**EHCP – education health and care plan**

**C and F – children and families directorate**

**CYP – children and young people**

**SCIS – Schools capital investment strategy (for all maintained schools)**

## **HEREFORDSHIRE DRAFT CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) 2020-2030**

Herefordshire Council has a statutory responsibility to provide enough high quality education places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) relating to their SEN or Disability.

### **Statement of intent**

Most children and young people (CYP) with SEND are educated at mainstream schools. Statutory guidance within the SEN Code of Practice (CoP), 2015, presumes that as many as possible will attend mainstream education with the support that they need. The buildings within mainstream schools need to be fit and adapted where necessary for this purpose, either supported by Herefordshire Council, in the case of council maintained schools, or the Government Education, Skills Funding Agency in the case of academy schools. In certain cases Herefordshire Council may also contribute to improvements in academy schools for special education, where appropriate. Only a small number of pupils will need physical adaptations to the mainstream school because of their need, and this is covered within the council accessibility strategy, which has been revised and is being prepared for consultation. This strategy does not cover any residential settings serving the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

### **Specialist settings**

Where pupils meet the criteria for specialist provision, parents are able to choose a place in a more specialist school setting. **The focus of this Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy for SEND is on specialist SEND schools and settings.**

With regard to specialist settings where admission requires an EHCP, our statement of intent is as follows: –

- That all Herefordshire children and young people with education, health and care plans for SEND are educated in high quality, fit for purpose buildings and grounds
- That enough space is available to commission places in settings that meet need within Herefordshire where possible
- That a well-planned approach to capital improvement projects in specialist SEND settings is followed, to ensure clear priorities and best value investment by the council

## Herefordshire Schools Capital Investment Strategy (SCIS)

The Children and Families (C and F) Directorate of Herefordshire Council published a guidance document in 2016, describing the rationale, methodology and processes involved in capital investment for all maintained schools in Herefordshire. The current version may be found on Herefordshire Council website. The SCIS is currently undergoing its five-year review, and the 2021-2026 version is due to be published in spring 2021. **This** document, (the **SEND** Capital Investment Strategy) is an important part of the overall SCIS and will be added as an appendix to the SCIS once that has been revised, consulted on and finalised).

Within the SCIS there are eleven guidance principles, which were originally developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. In summary, those principles are -

1. High quality learning environments are more likely to deliver best outcomes for children
2. The meaning of 'high quality' in this context
3. There will be a range of different sized schools across Herefordshire supporting future numbers of school age children, including faith schools. There is no preference as to whether or not schools are academies
4. High quality popular schools will be supported to expand where necessary
5. There will be no preferred size or organisation of schools
6. All schools should plan five years ahead (financially) for continuity
7. As a whole across Herefordshire there should be no more than 10% surplus school places
8. We will be increasingly responsible towards the environment
9. We will promote non-vehicle access routes to schools
10. Any financial investment must represent best value for investors
11. We will carry out consultation on any changes or investment proposals.

Note 1 – for all of the text under each of the headings above, see the full document on the council website.

Note 2 – in most but not all circumstances these principles will apply to this SEND capital investment strategy

### **Our approach towards capital improvement for Herefordshire specialist settings for SEND**

Relevant information is routinely collected, added to, revised and analysed, to help us 1. Forecast need for places in schools, and 2. Understand where we might need to invest most urgently in school capital works, and translate this into a strategy. Listed below is a summary description of this process for SEND.

1. Document, track and analyse the number of EHCPs awarded in Herefordshire, and compare this with national and similar local authority numbers
2. Document, track and analyse the number of pupils educated in specialist settings

3. Use available information from the government, local authorities (LAs) similar to Herefordshire, and council colleagues to plan for enough places in the future
4. Investigate and note: the number of spaces available now; the suitability of spaces available; and the condition of our current sites and buildings used by children and young people with SEND
5. Look at a range of solutions to any identified accommodation problems that would help us ensure enough high quality spaces for SEND pupils now and in the future, include proposed solutions in the strategy.
6. Consult on the draft strategy using the council consultation policy and methods
7. Feed the results of consultation back to the stakeholders
8. Put the strategy forward to Hereford council cabinet for approval
9. Publish the final proposed strategy with any changes thought necessary from consultation
10. Start to take action, by taking forward the first priority proposal using Herefordshire council governance and project management approaches



### **Our method for capital project prioritisation**

Each setting is considered using these focus areas –

- Sufficiency – how much physical capacity is there, allowing how many pupils?
- Compliance - suitability information, are the spaces suitable for the needs of, and number of pupils? (using the government building bulletin BB104 for guidance)
- Condition – what is the condition, and how cost effective is the building now and in the future and what is the likely maintenance and repair cost going to be in the future?
- Health and safety of the buildings and sites accommodated at the moment
- Designation and demand - use of forecast information to understand future type and number of spaces needed
- Cost of a proposed solution – a. cost of investigating whether the proposed solution is feasible, and b. the cost taking the project forward (land costs, construction costs and any/all other associated costs)

**We have circulated this SEND capital strategy document to stakeholders in order to gain their views on the proposals within it, (as per number 6 in the approach stated above). A summary of the consultation responses is contained in Appendix 2.**

**Herefordshire SEND provision – Current**






Mainstream education	Mainstream + specialist advice	Local specialist provision (resource bases with pupils on mainstream roll/site)	Local specialist provision (special schools)	Specialist independent schools or settings
 <b>Increasing complexity of need with increasing specialism/intensity of input and likely increased cost</b> 				
Vast majority of children have needs met - approx. 3000 with SEN from 23,000 total	Small proportion of children – approx. 500	Small proportion of children – approx. 100	Small proportion of children – approx. 350	Very small proportion of children – approx. 50
Additional cost range per pupil – 0-£9k	0-£9k	£11k-£19k	£16k-£30k	£25k-£100k
<b>All mainstream schools should offer:-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Quality Teaching</li> <li>• All staff trained in breadth of Needs</li> <li>• Advice from SENCO</li> <li>• Increasing intensity of support: Herefordshire Graduated Response <a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/16977/intervention_guidance_for_send_in_schools_and_other_educational_settings.pdf">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/16977/intervention_guidance_for_send_in_schools_and_other_educational_settings.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Includes expertise from outside of school staff Including relevant therapies for example	Small group sizes with trained specialist teachers, inclusion in mainstream lessons for part of the week, and relevant therapies	Small group sizes with trained specialist teachers and relevant therapies. Some outreach provided for pupils in mainstream schools	Small group sizes with trained specialist teachers, and relevant therapies
<b>Type of Need as described in SEND Code of Practice (CoP) 2015, with Herefordshire provision at each level</b>				
<b>Autism</b>	Educational Psychology Outreach from Hampton Dene	Communication and Social Interaction (COSI) Group, Child Development Centre, Language and Communication centre (LCC) Hampton Dene Primary, The Bridge, (BHBS). Further detailed investigation of autism place needs planned	Some children with autism and learning difficulty or challenging behaviour have needs met in local special school	Yes, usually ASD with challenging behaviour
<b>Speech, Language and Communication Needs</b>	Speech and language therapy	LCC Hampton Dene Primary	No	No
<b>Social Emotional and Mental Health</b>	Behaviour Support Team, EP	Proposed Nurture Provision KS1	Brookfield Pupil Referral Service	Yes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child unable to manage their emotions resulting in challenging behaviours incl. ADHD</li> <li>Anxiety/School Phobia/Eating Disorder/gender dysphoria</li> </ul>	CAMHS OT Counselling Advice from H3 CAMHS	Proposed Nurture Provision KS1 Home and Hospital Teaching Team – H3 Hub	No	Yes, usually Tier 4 specialist NHS beds
<b>Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment</b> Mainstream schools meet most need	Physical and Sensory Service (PASS)			Yes, placements extremely rarely used
<b>Physical Disability</b> Mainstream schools meet most need	PASS Team OT Physiotherapy	No – All mainstream schools should be able to meet need		Yes, placements extremely rarely used
<b>Learning Difficulties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Specific</b> All mainstream schools should be able to meet need: Specialist teachers employed by school</li> <li><b>Moderate</b> All mainstream schools should be able to meet need: Specialist teachers employed by school</li> <li><b>Severe and Profound</b></li> </ul>	Specialist teachers purchased from independent providers  Specialist teachers purchased from private providers  Advice from special schools		No  Only where a child has significant other complex needs  Barrs Court (11-19), Blackmarston (2-11), Westfield 2-19) and Beacon College (16-19)	No  Only where a child has significant other complex needs  Yes, usually combination of Severe LD, ASD and attendant challenging/high risk behaviours





**Capital investment required:** See summary of proposals page 10-12.

**Notes:** The diagram above sets out how Herefordshire Council and its partners seek to meet the breadth of SEND across the county. It is important to stress that the Council does not operate blanket policies. Taking all information about needs into account, and considering most efficient use of resources, it will seek to meet parental/pupil preference. It is also important to stress that children do not fall neatly into the types of need described. Placement decisions are therefore made using the best available information at the time the decision is made drawn from the advice of specialist professionals from a range of services and agencies.

**Overview of SEND strategy place planning and capital improvement**

1. <u>Type of setting</u> maintained by the council. (LD - learning disability, SEMH - social emotional and mental health) <b>CURRENT TYPE AND PHASE</b>	2. <u>Number of places and age groups</u> proposed in each school/setting <b>PROPOSED NUMBERS</b>	3. <u>Number of places</u> available. <b>CURRENT NUMBERS</b>	4. <u>Current accommodation suitability, sufficiency and condition</u> <b>CURRENT ACCOMMODATION QUALITY</b>
Total number of special school places proposed and current 	<b>365</b> (225 2-16 age LD, 60 Post-16 age LD and 80 7-16 age SEMH)	<b>355</b> (total of numbers in bold in the next three rows below, not including Brookfield short term intervention places)	
Settings 			
LD <u>2-19</u> special schools - Barrs Court academy school 2-19, Blackmarston council maintained school 2-11, Westfield council maintained school 2-19. 	Blackmarston 85 2-11 age, Barrs Court 80 11-16 age, Westfield 60 2-16 age	Blackmarston 87, Barrs Court 118 (includes 45 post 16) Westfield 63 (includes 13 post 16). See proposal on page 8 about current sixth form provision at Barrs Court and Westfield schools	2-11 accommodation at Blackmarston good, condition, sufficiency and suitability at Westfield for 2-19 poor, access and sufficiency at Barrs Court for 11-19 poor.
LD future <u>16-19</u> special school  Beacon College opening September 2021, proposed to replace sixth form provision at Westfield and Barrs Court	Beacon College 60 Opening September 2021, will be able to accommodate minimum 60 students.	0 at Beacon until Sept 21. See above for sixth form numbers currently at Barrs Court and Westfield	Note - poor accommodation for current 16-19 students at Barrs Court and Westfield new accommodation at Beacon College from September 2021
SEM <u>7-16</u> Brookfield academy school 	Brookfield School 80 places plus 8 FTE places for short term intervention work currently provided at the school.  The aim is to achieve a modest reduction in numbers from 90 to	Brookfield 90, plus 8 FTE intervention places for pupils still on roll at a mainstream school.	Current accommodation non-compliant. No girls' toilets, no sports facilities and poor off site accommodation. Improvement project underway



	80 through outreach work in mainstream schools and supporting school nurture groups		
<b>Alternative provision 11-16 Herefordshire pupil referral service</b> (PRS) council maintained. 	<b>Under consultation: propose 50</b> full time equivalent (fte). 40 fully funded for permanent exclusions, 10 for schools to purchase on a Tiered Intervention Programme)	<b>65 places</b> 50 fully funded by LA, 15 for purchase at full cost by schools. Number have dropped, review in light of Covid impact on numbers	Current split site accommodation non-compliant, condition poor at 11-14 centre, access for vehicles and suitability poor for 14-16 centre.
<b>Alternative provision 11-16 Home and hospital teaching service H3</b> 	<b>H3 25 fte commissioned places for up to 50 part-time pupils,</b> accommodation planned for up to 24 at any one time.	<b>50 part-time pupils</b>	Under compliant and cramped accommodation, teaching spaces unsuitable for appropriate teaching methods
<b>Resourced Provision 2-116 Hampton Dene Primary LCC</b> (Language base and Autism base both with a 2-7 age and 7-11 age class) <b>Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School – The Bridge</b> (Autism Base for 8 secondary pupils) 	Spaces needed at both age ranges is under further investigation, see pages 9 and 10 below	Currently has <b>45 primary and 8 secondary places</b> commissioned	Accommodation at KS1 and 2 setting good, accommodation at KS3/4 setting good but no capacity for increasing provision
<b>Independent and non-maintained provision – a range of organisations in and out of county</b> 	Individual case by case, <b>not possible to forecast.</b> Provision sought when needs require and particular pupil needs not supportable in-county	Varies – approximately <b>50 day and residential places</b> including places funded by a range of agencies, not just education	No information, out of county. No changes planned as these are private organisations responsible for their own capital investment.

### 1. Strategic options considered for learning disability (LD) schools

	Option	Comment
A	No change	Not feasible on the basis of ongoing maintenance and suitability issues at Westfield, cramped conditions at Westfield and Barrs Court and poor access/parking at Westfield and Barrs Court. In addition, serious issues raised in fire risk assessment for Westfield. There is also a need to create modest capacity increase in provision for LD across the county

B	Close all LD schools and build one county through 2-19 school	Not feasible on basis of travel time for very young pupils, previous investment at Blackmarston, successful bid for government funded 16-19 school and lack of site availability for very large school in a central location
C	Relocate Barrs Court School to another central location, expand to accommodate 2-16 pupils and close Westfield	Not feasible due to travel time for very young pupils, and lack of site availability for very large school in central location
D	Improve/rebuild Westfield school to take 60 pupils from 2-16, phase out Westfield and Barrs Court sixth form after the new post 16 college opens. Discuss concerns regarding Barrs Court School site shortcomings with DfE and ESFA, to look at possibility of funding for relocation to a new site	Preferred option, keeping travel time as low as possible for young pupils, transport costs as low as possible, and creation of a small increase in available places for 2-16 pupils at Westfield School. In addition this option retains the potential for supporting applications for 2-16 places from out of county.

**Proposed course of action** – pursue option D by undertaking a feasibility study into best way to achieve improved accommodation for a 60 place Westfield school for 2-16 year olds. **Consult in 2021** on proposal to close by phasing out the Westfield sixth form starting from September 2022. Discuss an approach to DfE with Barrs Court Trust regarding the accommodation issues at Barrs Court School.

## **2. Strategic options considered for the SEMH school (Brookfield only SEMH school)**

	Option	Comment
A	No change	Not feasible on the basis of non-compliance with BB104, lack of girls' toilets and lack of sports facilities. Note, Brookfield is the only Herefordshire school with SEMH designation
B	Remodel and extend at current site	Explored possibilities by commissioning a feasibility survey in 2018/19
C	Rebuild at current site or at another site to be identified	As above

**Action undertaken-** as a result of the feasibility study commissioned in 2018/19 agreed option to remodel and extend current facilities. Project funded and underway.

## **3. Strategic option for alternative provision (Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service - HPRS one school on split sites)**

	Option	Comment
A	No change	Not feasible on the basis of high cost of ongoing maintenance and repair, non-compliance, cramped conditions and poor access
B	Expand one of the current sites to accommodate all pupils on roll	Preferred option but may be difficult due to lack of space at either.

C	Dispose of both sites and build a new PRS for all pupils on a new site to be identified	May be difficult, new site would be needed, which may be difficult in a City location, but would enable equity release from sale of both current sites.
D	Build a new key stage accommodation for one or both on current site(s)	Unsatisfactory, leaves school on split sites and would not represent value for money.

**Proposed course of action**- proposed way forward is to commission a feasibility survey to look at the options available, high level cost and best solution for further examination.

#### **4. Strategic options for home and hospital teaching service (H3)**

	Options	Comments
A	No change	Not feasible on the basis of cramped conditions, poor compliance and increased numbers of places needed since the service opened
B	Remodel the current building to improve compliance and suitability of spaces for pupil need	This would provide a short term solution to suitability of spaces, but not relieve cramped conditions. Site unsuitable for further expansion (situated currently on Riverside Primary School site)
C	Pursue the feasibility of using the post-16 hub on Symonds Street currently occupied by Barrs Court Trust sixth form, when vacated. Vacate current H3 site and relocate the service to the Symonds Street building after internal modifications have been made.	Best option, investigate design and cost with council property services and timeline with Barrs Court Trust.

**Proposed course of action** - proposed option is to produce a business plan for option C, and investigate design, time and cost implications. Interim measures to be put in place to mitigate present capacity issues at H3 as a potential project is developed.

#### **5. Strategic options for primary resourced provision for autism**

	Option	Comment
A	No change	Emerging need for extra capacity. Use of out of county solutions or private settings may cause longer travel times for young children, and poor value for money
B	Establish a second primary school resourced provision	May expand the provision above that of similar authorities, but this may be necessary to reflect local need and geographical factors. To be discussed
C	Expand the current primary resourced provision	This would lead to a disproportionate number of children with an EHCP in a single mainstream primary school, to be discussed with Hampton Dene school leaders

**Proposed course of action – proposed next step is to conduct further work on the capacity needed at KS1 and 2, and the trend at national and similar local authority level. This will enable a proposed option to be brought forward**

**6. Strategic options for secondary resourced provision for autism**

	Option	Comment
A	No change	May not enable Herefordshire to meet need, and lead to expensive out of county placements or use of costly private settings
B	Establish an additional secondary school resourced provision	May expand the provision above that of similar authorities, but this may be necessary to reflect local need and geographical factors. To be discussed
C	Commission the creation of extra capacity from an existing provider at an off-site setting to support those with a greater complexity of need	Needs to be supported by an in-depth study of actual, potential (numbers coming through) and 'hidden' (pupils not yet known) demand within current and future pupil population

**Proposed course of action - next step is to conduct further work on the capacity and type of provision needed at KS3 and 4, and the trend at national and similar local authority level. This will enable a proposed option to be brought forward**

**Note – following on from the further work needed to determine both primary and secondary resourced provision proposed options, the strategy will be updated in due course.**

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**NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO SEND SETTINGS 2020-30**

- **Consultation on the strategy with stakeholders – closed on 9 February 2021**
- **Consultation on the strategy with Scrutiny Committee – meeting on 23 March 2021**
- **Summary of above responses sent out as feedback to stakeholders – 30 March 2021**
- **Final strategy presented to Herefordshire Council Cabinet for approval – 22 April 2021**

**Note - The consultation on the strategy follows Herefordshire Council’s consultation process, and changes thought necessary after consideration of responses will be made before the strategy is brought to Herefordshire Council Cabinet for decision. A summary of consultation responses and changes will be produced as feedback for stakeholders when all responses have been received, and after discussion at the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee.**

Setting	Scope and scale	Funding	Comment
<b>Barrs Court Trust 11-19 LD academy school</b>	Collect information ref condition, suitability and capacity and support discussions between Barrs Court Trust	To be explored, likely to be DfE academy condition	BCT to provide current condition report and commission internal and external suitability survey to support discussions with DfE

	and the DfE about solutions to the cramped 11-16 conditions and poor vehicle access and parking. Support BCT in phasing out of sixth form provision	improvement fund and any available government grants	
<b>Beacon Post-16 LD academy college</b>	Work with the DfE to complete the new buildings. Start to commission places on opening in Sept 2021	Successful bid for government funding for total cost, and DfE project managing the build.	Underway, completion August 2021. School consultation conducted in line with bid conditions. <b><u>Not included in this consultation.</u></b>
<b>Westfield 2-19 LD school</b>	Conduct a feasibility study into the best option for improved Westfield school provision for 60 2-16 LD places, and consult on the closure of post-16 Westfield LD provision.	Feasibility study costs from current council forward plan budget for preliminary works to inform capital proposals	Draft proposal for appointing of feasibility contractor underway in readiness for finalising and cabinet approval. Feasibility work will include a possible sixth form element, until the council decision on the future of the sixth form at Westfield is made.
<b>Brookfield 7-16 SEMH academy school</b>	As a result of a feasibility study in 2018/19 capital improvements are underway for the Brookfield school to bring off-site provision onto one site, remodel current secondary provision and provide a new sports hall for all pupils.	Special provision government grant and council funding already existing in the forward plan	Project underway, at developed design stage. School consultation conducted for special provision fund previously, in line with fund conditions. Council capital legacy funding in place from 2016. <b><u>Not included in this consultation.</u></b>
<b>Alternative provision (PRS) for 11-16 pupils disengaged from mainstream</b>	Conduct feasibility exercise into the options presented in the alternative provision table (page 8-9 above)	Funding for feasibility work to be informed by council capital funding principles April 2021 onwards	Discuss proposal for feasibility work at Children and Families Capital Strategy board
<b>Resourced Provision (RP) for pupils autism needs and an EHCP</b>	Conduct further investigative work on needs and spaces required, (as stated in tables on pages 9-10 above) followed by feasibility work to produce a proposed option for both primary and secondary RP for autism. Consult on resulting RP proposals and update SEND capital strategy	Investigative work to be completed by council officers. Funding for feasibility work to be informed by council capital funding	Discuss proposal for feasibility work at Children and Families Capital Strategy board

		methods April 2021 onwards	
<b>Home and hospital teaching service (H3)</b> for pupils too unwell to attend mainstream school	Commission work into design and high level cost of internal modifications to Symonds Street building currently in use for post 16 Barrs Court Trust LD provision, in order to accommodate the H3 provision	Funding for any proposed work to be discussed when design and costs information is available. Likely source of funding to be annual government schools maintenance and repair capital grant	Proposal for commissioning of design development and costing work to be taken to Directorate capital programme board for discussion in the first instance.

### Meaning of terms used in the strategy

**SEND** - special educational needs and disabilities

**CYP** – children and young people

**EHCP** – education health and care plan

**Maintained schools** – those funded and maintained by the council

**Academy or free schools** – those funded and maintained directly by the government

**DfE** – department for education

**ESFA** – education and, skills funding agency (the group providing funds for academy/free schools)

**Capital projects** – projects to improve buildings and or sites

**SCIS** – the council schools capital investment strategy describing the capital approach to all maintained local authority schools

**LD** – learning disability

**SEMh** – social, emotional, mental health

**CoP** – SEND code of practice document (DfE Statutory Guidance 2015)

**C and F** – Herefordshire Council Children and Families Directorate

**LA** – local authority

**SENCO** – special educational needs co-ordinator in a school

**COSI** – communication and social interaction group

**LCC** – language and communication centre

**BHBS** – Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School

**EP** – education psychologist

**CAMHS** – child and adolescent mental health service

**OT**- occupational therapy

**H3** – home and hospital hub  
**ADHD** – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder  
**PASS** – physical and sensory service  
**HPRS** – Herefordshire pupil referral service  
**Fte** – full time equivalent places  
**BB104** – government building bulletin number 104 covering SEND accommodation  
**BCT** – Barrs Court Trust  
**KS1 and 2** – primary school age children  
**KS3 and 4** – secondary school age children  
**Post-16** – sixth form age young people





## HEREFORDSHIRE DRAFT CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) 2020-2030

### APPENDIX 2 TO THE SEND CAPITAL STRATEGY REPORT FOR SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2021

#### Draft strategy consultation history

1. During the development of the strategy there has been a range of consultation activity. Initially some strategy suggestions were put forward to head teachers of special schools, when it became evident to the SEND commissioning team that demand for places in specialist settings was increasing (2016/2017). This led to the application for a new government funded 16-19 college, which was successful. Subsequent investigation into the trend of increased pressure on places across all age ranges in the county also prompted further examination of the national picture and the situation within similar authorities. Concerns as to this trend and the need to respond were raised at a Directorate level, and shared with the Director, Assistant Director and member for education. A draft strategy was formulated that considered current capacity deficiencies, and also suitability and condition of accommodation in current settings. This draft was shared with the council members for assets, education and finance.
2. A sequence of further consultation, leading to refining and shaping of the final strategy was conducted, including several meetings with school leaders of the special school in Leominster to specifically discuss proposals for that school.
3. The draft was then shared with the capital consultancy group, which is a group of school leaders representative of all schools and settings in Herefordshire. Members, include head teachers, governors, and bursars/business managers representing all age ranges of mainstream schools, and also representatives of special schools.
4. The strategy was refined and revised at several stages in the process, and following receipt of the countywide recent condition reports for maintained schools in 2020, completed and presented to the Director of Children and Families.
5. The final draft was then circulated for consultation on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021, by the Children and Families (C and F) business support team. The published consultation included a link for all consultees to respond with their views via a survey monkey questionnaire. The strategy was circulated to all Herefordshire school leaders by the weekly Spotlight publication, with encouragement to share this with as many recipients as they thought would have interest in reading and responding. In addition the strategy was sent personally to all parents and carers of children and young people with an education, health and care plan for

SEND, and the SEND strategy consultation group of all SEND education and social care professionals, convened and chaired by Herefordshire Council Head of Additional Needs.

6. In addition to the above, the draft strategy was circulated to the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee, member for education, member for assets, and Leominster ward councillors, ( in regard to their anticipated interest in the particular recommendations regarding the special school in Leominster.
7. The above consultation on the final draft strategy closed on 9<sup>th</sup> February. **\*\*For a summary of responses please see below.**
8. Final consultation on the draft strategy will be by full scrutiny committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.
9. Following receipt of scrutiny committee views, the full range of consultation responses will be considered, and any amendments thought necessary to the strategy will be completed.
10. Political groups will be consulted as part of the process of submitting the final report to cabinet for decision.
11. Summary feedback will be provided to all respondents to the recent consultation, explaining whether responses have resulted in any change to the strategy.

## **SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TO RECENT CONSULTATION**

### **Questionnaire comments made regarding each proposal within the SEND draft capital strategy consultation and percentage agreement or disagreement in each case**

**Total number of respondents 52. (Five respondents represent 9.6%, figures below rounded to 1dp)**

**Number who completed a response to every question – 52**

**Number of respondents that commented on at least one question - 26**

#### **General point made in the comments**

- Six of 52 respondents commented on the need for simpler language. Action – simplify where possible and add glossary of terms.

<p><b><u>Q1 The description of the Council rationale for a SEND capital strategy and the proposed way forward is helpful</u></b> <b>Strongly agree/agree – 69.5%, Neither agree or disagree – 19.2%, strongly disagree or disagree – 17.3%.</b></p> <p><b>R7</b> In principle, it is a sound rationale. In terms of implementing it with parity across all schools, there needs to be a lot more clarification of how this will be achieved in reality without disadvantaging any one school. How will the rationale for the adaptations for students with</p>	<p><b><u>Directorate response to comments</u></b></p> <p>As stated in the strategy, capital investment proposals are based upon a full range of accommodation information, including parental preference but prioritising those settings with the most pressing need for improvement first.</p>
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physical needs be achieved given the substantial costs that are often associated? What will be the balance of parent preference verses the capital investment required?

**R8** strongly feel that working on improving the existing building and keeping a 6th form at Westfield would be the preferred option for my child

**R13** The document appears to significantly reduce the provision for specialist accommodation in the city when what we are experiencing is a huge increase in the need for specialist intervention places but an inability for schools to afford to fund these places. It appears that the council is reducing its support and expertise for the children that are requiring it most. This document indicates a further reduction of 87 places for these young people when what is greatly needed is reinvestment.

**R19** Not enough specialist settings within Herefordshire

**R22** An encompassing approach to support a diverse range of children with special needs is vital across Herefordshire. Currently there are inadequacies and gaps in provision for children who do not fit into specific categories. There is a woeful lack of initial assessment and subsequent support for children at an early stage when preventing the escalation of any difficulties is possible.

**R28** It is a typical council document written for professionals. It is not written for lay people to read. Could it be explained plainly for parents of SEND children who are not always degree educated!

**R32** It's a bit befuddled in parts but it's a good try!

**R35** Broadly agree with the strategy outlined. BCS requires capital investment to ensure it meets capacity. Additional consultation would be welcomed throughout the process.

**R38** There were issues with the document; I found it may be inaccessible/difficult to completely understand, and, in the key is refers to colours representing different investment scenarios, yet the document is in black and white

**R40** Agree but a bit difficult to navigate.

**R42** Couldn't find it the document on the council website?

**R50** Elements of confusion between a capital strategy and service delivery

This respondent has misunderstood the question, which is not about Westfield School

The strategy actually adds places to learning disability specialist schools, both at 2-16 and also post 16 age phases. There is a proposed decrease in capacity for the pupil referral unit, which accommodates mostly children who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools, as these numbers have fallen. In addition, intervention placements for children which would currently have been provided at Brookfield, is proposed to be provided in new nurture groups attached to mainstream primary schools, thus the reduction of intervention places proposed at Brookfield.

More of a comment about service provision than capital investment, but noted.

Comment on needs assessment processes, not capital projects

Yes, simplification will be worked on

As above  
In support

Yes simplification will be worked on, and reemoval of colour coding

As above

The document was on the website.

Good point, do we take out the references to service delivery?

The option to close all LD schools and build one was considered, as with all options, but discarded. The closure of the sixth form was proposed as a solution to

**R51** Some of the descriptions of the proposed plans contradict each other: if it is not feasible to "close all LD schools and build one county through 2-19 school" (LD school option B) then why is it acceptable to close the 16-19 provision at our special schools and combine them into one?

the very small numbers of pupils in the Westfield sixth form setting.

**Q1 Comments overview – simplify language; clarify places; and service delivery. Action – simplify text where possible, clarify proposals for increase or decrease of places and where, refer service responses to Head of Additional Needs for forthcoming SEND strategy consultation.**

**Q2 The document explains the way in which the council is seeking to use accurate information to decide when and where it will invest in order to improve buildings and facilities where children with SEND are taught Strongly agree/agree – 69.2% neither agree or disagree – 19.2%, strongly disagree or disagree – 13.5%.**

**R7** I'm not sure how in the current situation in Herefordshire with regard to secondary schools that the statement 'Sufficiency – how much physical capacity is there, allowing how many pupils?' for considering the setting of each school. Given that the majority of secondary schools are already full or that some may not be open to expansion, gives a consistent approach across the county.

**R8** I agree improvement is needed in existing buildings at Westfield, but not that funding should be sent elsewhere

**R13** There is little information provided for the changes proposed

**R28** I've read the document and I'm really not sure

**R32** There's perhaps a bit too many 'to be decided' or 'needs further consultation' aspects, but generally going in the right direction to support SEND children.

**R35** We agree accurate information should be used to make decisions. This can only be achieved with wider consultation with stakeholders to obtain up to date and accurate information.

**R42** Very often the parent or carers are the best people to accurately determine where a child is best educated.

**R52** The document is confusing and does not describe an approach to the distribution of capital.

This respondent has misread the strategy, which refers only to SEND schools, not mainstream secondary schools

This question does not refer to Westfield School  
Difficult to strike a balance, some want more, some want less information.

Simplify where possible

Some solutions (e.g. ref autism provision), are not yet fully investigated, but needed to be referred to.

Wider consultation is proposed for the Westfield sixth form proposal. We try to gather accurate information as frequently as possible.

We agree, that is why consultations with parents and carers are held frequently, through the Education, health and care plan annual review.

The document indicates priorities, the budget for each is unknown until a feasibility study for each individual project is conducted.

**Q2 Comments overview – clarification if possible. Action – simplify text where possible, respond to above queries/requests for clarification in general feedback published**

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**Q3.The proposed course of action for schools for pupils with a learning disability is appropriate a) Undertake a feasibility study into the best way to achieve improved accommodation for a 60 place 2-16 Westfield School. b) Consult in 2021 on the proposal to close by phasing out the Westfield Sixth Form starting from one year after the opening date for the Beacon Post-16 College.**

**Strongly agree/agree – 48.1% neither agree nor disagree – 32.7% strongly disagree or disagree – 23.1%.**

**R8** I agree point a) is needed, but not with point b). I feel it is important for my child to have continuity up to and including post 16 at Westfield. I feel that would best meet my child's needs.

**R11** My daughter attends Westfield Sixth Form from out of county as it is the nearest school. The small class size is necessary for her with a programme structured for her needs. A large 60 pupil college would not be appropriate She has great support from staff and has high anxiety levels which has required support from CAMHS and having the support from an individual learning mentor for weekly sessions makes a big difference. A large college where this support may not be included as the focus will be on independence .The community of Leominster have always supported the school and the learning is also done in the community including visiting the shops, library, running a cafe in town, horticulture at a national trust property close to Leominster. The school is attended by local police and other agencies to make sure pupils have good safety knowledge. Westfield sixth form staff are always very approachable they have visited my daughters home environment when she had a prolonged absence from school to help her back to school which was a god send when anxiety levels are high

**R12** Westfield is a school that serves the Leominster community. For students with severe learning difficulties to travel to Hereford for Sixth Form, this could prove an additional challenge. I am concerned that this is a further example of funding being taken from Leominster and again being diverted into Hereford.

**R14** I strongly agree to the feasibility study to improve Westfield School however, I strongly disagree to the proposed closure of Westfield Sixth Form. I strongly feel it is unfair and divisive to not allow separate responses to these two questions. This is not a fair consultation questionnaire.

**R15** Yes Rebuild Westfields On It's Current Site. We as Parents Of A Future 6th Former Feel Very Strongly That 6th Form Provision Should Be Kept At Westfield.

Support for investment. Parent would like child to continue to Westfield sixth form

Out of county pupil, would like to continue at Westfield. Shropshire LA has indicated interest in commissioning places at the new college in Hereford when it opens

Support for retaining sixth form, concern about travel. Also concern ref investment taken from Leominster to Hereford generally. Transport modelling has been conducted, described within scrutiny report.

Agreeing with investment, disagrees with sixth form closure.

Agrees with investment, wishes child to continue on to Westfield sixth form

**R17** Travel time affects both younger and older children with ASD. Westfield school provides excellent education settings for all year groups. Smaller six form provides better personal relations.

**R22** A robust provision must be available to ensure adequate transition for the students to the new placement and emotional support in addition to their current needs for those students completing their time with a reduced student number in Westfield.

**R23** I strongly agree that improving accommodation for Westfield is important but strongly disagree with phasing out Westfield Sixth Form as I believe all students especially those with SEND should have a choice of sixth form provision rather than a single provider. I also believe that all the students currently at Westfield should be able to continue there until they are 19 years old, should they and their parents choose to do so

**R28** The proposal to improve Westfield school with a feasibility study is a very good idea. What I worry about is that this is the “sweetie” for the fact that you wish to remove their sixth form. As a parent who can’t get transport to Westfield for our child even though it is the best place for him I feel that the needs of the INDIVIDUAL child are not high in the Councils thoughts or strategy. If you close Westfields sixth form the children from this area will miss out and so will our child.

**R38** Agree, good provision must be based locally for those 2-16 in the north of the county is important.

**R42** Westfield is a 2-19yrs school. Is the council unaware of this?

**R48** Surely it would be better to do a feasibility study before sending the option out as it may not be feasible!

**R50** both strongly agree and strongly disagree. I strongly agree that improved accommodation is needed at Westfield. I strongly disagree that the feasibility study mandates the age range, which is to be consulted on at a later date. I also strongly disagree with phasing out the sixth form, as this limits choice.

**R51** Strongly agree - Westfield School is spread across 2 buildings which were originally built for different purposes, and need to be completely renovated to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose. This is clearly a necessity. b) strongly disagree on the proposal of Westfield's Sixth Form being phased out, for the following reasons: - The provision of 2-19

Worried ref travel time, wants a small sixth form (Beacon college class sizes will be the same as Westfield, Westfield has mixed age classes). Personal relationships at Barrs Court are outstanding (Ofsted). No reason to think this won't be the case when BCT leads Beacon.

We agree. As with other pupils, for example those moving from Blackmarston to Barrs Court or Westfield at 11, or Barrs Court main school to the Hub, this is a very important support framework to provide.

Agrees with investment, would like choice. Currently parents do not have choice of more than one SEMH school, or hospital support service, or pupil referral service. Mainstream sixth form colleges all have very large cohorts to accommodate thousands of post-16 children, and are financially viable.

Agrees with investment. Wants child to continue at Westfield. Parents and carers of children in the south, east and west of county would also no doubt like a school in their immediate locality, but these options aren't feasible or affordable for the very small numbers of post 16 pupils needing this service (60 across the whole county).

In agreement

This respondent couldn't find the strategy on the website, so has responded to the questionnaire without information. (see response to Q1)

We are conducting a feasibility study for 2-16 and 2-19, results due in May.

Agrees with investment, wants choice.

Agrees with investment, is satisfied with provision at Westfield, concerns ref travel, change, unfamiliar environment, lack of understanding, loss of immediate local community, feels that larger sixth forms are



education enables learners to build on their existing experience and skills and grow into capable, confident adults, while being supported by staff who they have already built up strong, secure relationships with. -Accessing a central Post-16 provision in Hereford City is not feasible for some students, for a number of reasons including: lack of access to travel or inability to tolerate long journeys; difficulty coping with change and unfamiliar environments; vulnerability due to a lack of social understanding, etc. Additionally, students would not have as much opportunity to build relationships with their local community and their peers as they would at Westfield School. - There are plenty of examples of counties which have just one special school or post-16 provision where those provisions have proven to be too large, too overwhelming and not able to respond to the needs of their learners to the same standard as a smaller provision. All students and their families deserve a choice of educational provisions. Mainstream students in Herefordshire moving into Post-16 provision have the choice of: Hereford Sixth Form College, Hereford and Ludlow College (Hereford City and Holme Lacy campuses), Hereford College of Arts, Earl Mortimer Sixth Form, John Kerle Sixth Form, John Masefield Sixth Form. Under this new proposal, SEND students would have only one option: The Beacon. This feels like discrimination

**R52** Accommodation at Westfield requires significant investment. This is factually correct. It should not refer to specific age ranges, since a building that is in need of improvement is just that. It makes no difference for what age range that improvement is intended. There is no need to phase out post-16 provision at Westfield school, since this is outstanding regardless of the poor quality buildings. To remove one of two post-16 provisions would remove all aspects of choice for learners. The Beacon College was built under the remit of the Free School programme, which is intended to increase choice and variety of provision based on evidence of need. Free Schools are not intended to replace existing poor quality buildings, or lead to the closure of existing provision.

unsuccessful in other parts of the country. Wants choice. We agree that Westfield provides good service – for a very small number of pupils at post-16. The good quality of this service referred to, is outstanding at Barrs Court. BC trust are to lead the new college. There is every likelihood that the same excellent education in all aspects will be available at the Beacon. Regarding choice of post 16 provision, there are thousands of post 16 students moving into mainstream post 16, but between 50-60 needing LD post 16 (this includes those small number of students coming in from neighbouring counties).

Agrees with investment. Each proposal, particularly for SEND, needs to describe age range, as post 16 facilities are different. The question is, should we be proposing to invest a significant amount of public funds to build a sixth form element for less than 12 students(may be less than ten when new college opens), if we do, are we prepared to also do this in other market towns?

The comment about free school purpose is correct. The free school programme is intended to add capacity. However, it does not forbid closure of other settings if there are good reasons. One of the reasons in this case is viability. This is why we are proposing to consult on closure, as to not do so and invest in like for like may be seen to be poor use of capital funding, and setting a precedent which would make arguments for similar investment elsewhere difficult to refute.

**Q3 Comments overview – comments are all in agreement with the investment in new Westfield buildings, the objections aired are to the proposal to consult on closure of the Westfield sixth form.**  
**Actions – examine views of Director of C and F, scrutiny committee and relevant members as to**

whether the proposal to consult on possible closure of the Westfield Sixth Form remains in the strategy.

**Q4 The proposed course of action for alternative provision (Hereford Pupil Referral Service) is appropriate - 'Commission a feasibility survey to look at the options available, high level cost and best solution for further examination' Strongly agree/agree – 69.2% neither agree or disagree – 25.0%, strongly disagree or disagree – 5.8%.**

**R8** I'm sorry but I do not understand this statement. I do not feel the question is formed in an accessible way for parents to understand.

**R13** I believe 'High Level cost' is the driving force behind this survey, not the provision or needs of young people. The consultation should be made primarily on what schools and young people require to enable that every child can access an educational curriculum best suited to their needs. If driven by cost, we will continue to face more and more cuts to this essential educational setting. We have witnessed cuts to our provision, to our staffing, to our general upkeep. Changes made, have meant that we receive children when they are often broken by the system, rather than when an intervention package can be put in place that will provide the greatest opportunity for change and success. Without the additional funding and improved setting, we become a holding ground for children that the system has given up on.

**R22** The schools require substantial investment in order to support the diverse and vulnerable students it caters for.

**R25** How would this affect the service (St Owens – Aspire Living) for adults with complex needs that shares the building with B/C sixth form? That must be taken in to consideration of what impact this may have on them.

**R32** Just get something done and cut out the talk, commit to it....costs will ALWAYS be going up!

**R48** Surely it would be better to do a feasibility study before sending the option out as it may not be feasible!

We agree that simplification before general publication should be worked on.

This response is from a pupil referral unit member of staff. High level cost will always be an aspect of any proposal, but there has been a great deal of fact finding and discussion about current need, and the needs that we can try to anticipate for the future. It is good to see that in fact numbers of children and young people being permanently excluded from mainstream and needing places at the pupil referral unit have in fact decreased. This may in part be due to Covid closures, and will need to be carefully analysed. Numbers of places available for school leaders to access for intervention have remained, for individual schools to access.

Agreeing with investment

This response refers to question 5 not this question?

We can only commit to a project when it has been agreed through the project management process. We have to prepare a brief when we send out procurement documentation. The brief needs to give a steer as to what we need – numbers of places and type of accommodation – based on government buildings guidelines for settings of this type.



**Q4 Comments overview - one response to wrong question, one from staff member resisting reduction in PRU numbers, one keen to get on with it, one to wait for feasibility before proposing any option. Action – some simplification of text where possible, give general feedback to other points.**

**Q5 The proposed course of action for the home and hospital teaching (H3) is appropriate 'Produce a business plan for Council approval proposing to remodel the building currently used by Barrs Court post 16 students at Symonds Street for use by H3 when it is vacated, investigating design, time and cost implications. Interim measures to be put in place to mitigate present capacity issues at H3 as a potential project is developed' Strongly agree/agree – 63.5% neither agree nor disagree – 32.7% strongly disagree or disagree – 3.9%.**

R8 Again, I do not follow this statement.

R13 If this is seen as a beneficial proposal for H3 rather than a temporary sticking plaster, then yes.

R22 Opportunity to engage vulnerable students requires a range of spaces and teaching environments

R26 H3 requires a purpose built setting with potential to expand in future years. It also requires significant calm quiet outside space

Simplification will be considered where possible  
In agreement, the remodel would follow government building recommendations for this special need.  
As above

As above – we agree, ideally an outside learning environment is needed, either on site or easily accessible nearby.

**Q5 Comments overview – agreement, simplification if poss. Action – simplify text in strategy if possible**

**Q6 This proposed course of action for primary age resourced provision for autism is appropriate 'Conduct further work on the capacity at KS1 and 2, and the trend at national and statistical neighbour level. This will enable a proposed project to be brought forward' Strongly agree/agree – 75% neither agree nor disagree – 17.3% strongly disagree or disagree – 7.7%.**

R3 Also need to look at the trend in Herefordshire and the cohorts that exist in nurseries to inform our need. National and statistical neighbour isn't always best indicators of our local situation

R8 I feel Westfield as it stands offers every opportunity and all the continuity of care my 13 year old needs. To make a big transition at post 16 would be very disruptive to her security, learning and stability

We agree, this is why we are proposing further investigation.

The respondent has again misread the question which refers to provision for children at the home and hospital resource bases not Westfield School

<p><b>R22</b> Earlier interventions and support strategies are vital to help children with such difficulties to fully engage in education and society.</p> <p><b>R28</b> I know of many ASD children who have never been given provision for them. I feel we need to increase funding for all ASD CYPs irrelevant of ability and therefor make diagnosis easier and more helpful.</p> <p><b>R32</b> Wording for this proposal is rather non-understandable to ordinary people...please rephrase in simple English.</p> <p><b>R45</b> I strongly believe that better provision for autistic pupils needs to be provided in mainstream and specialist schools. This can only be done if significant funding is used to increase integrated and specialised Hubs, teaching staff and appropriate neuro-diverse learning environments in mainstream schools particularly. I appreciate that this would be a huge financial outgoing but strongly believe that it would be a valuable investment for children - giving them the best possible chances to learn in ways that best suit them (SEN &amp; neurotypical pupils) be themselves, be happy, confident moving forward through to secondary provision which nurtures their needs and allows them to grow into happy, healthy adults.</p> <p><b>R48</b> Herefordshire currently has no placement for higher functioning autism and many pupils are send to schools that are not appropriate and do not meet need. This proposal will not meet current need in a timescale that is acceptable. My Child is has a diagnosis of Autism and is currently being sent to a SEMH school, it is affecting his mental health and his academic levels are falling consistently</p>	<p>We agree, a proposal to set up nurture groups attached to some primary schools has been agreed and is under development. This is a service provision comment, but noted</p> <p>Simplification where possible</p> <p>A service provision comment but noted for inclusion in further information gathering</p> <p>This seems to agree with our proposal, but is disappointed in the timescale as it won't benefit their child. <b>Noted for individual follow up.</b></p>
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**Q6 Comment overview – agreement, some simplification required, some observations about service provision. Action – simplify where possible, use general feedback, and pass service provision comments for use in SEND strategy consultation which is forthcoming**

<p><b><u>Q7 This proposed course of action for secondary age resourced provision for autism is appropriate 'Conduct further work on the capacity and type of provision needed at KS3 and 4, and the trend at national and statistical neighbour level. This will enable a proposed project to be brought forward'</u>. <b>Strongly agree/agree – 73.1% neither agree or disagree – 17.3%, strongly disagree or disagree – 9.6%.</b></b></p> <p><b>R3</b> Many ASC children have to travel long distances to attend appropriate provision. However provision attached to mainstream isn't appropriate for children that currently require an out of county provision</p>	<p>This is a comment on need for some children to access out of county settings which we agree with. We do commission those places, but aim to ensure as much provision in-county as possible</p>
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<p><b>R8</b> Again I do not feel I understand the statement. My daughter has autistic traits and I feel she is very well catered for at Westfield</p> <p><b>R22</b> Other areas of support need to be established at the same time so that children with other difficulties are not lost through lack of appropriate provision</p> <p><b>R24</b> It's also a worrying time for parents trying to organise colleges and what's in store for those leaving high school with aspects of what aftercare is to follow</p> <p><b>R26</b> The Bridge provision needs completely rethinking and investment. Provision is significantly underfunded and inadequate. A larger provision will allow students to remain within the Bridge at all times instead of having to spend most of their time struggling in mainstream classes. If support and investment in this provision was made fewer children would have to attend H3 or be educated out of county</p> <p><b>R32</b> 'Statistical neighbour?</p> <p><b>R33</b> Don't really understand why there is specialist provision for 60 pupils at KS1 and 2 but only 8 for KS3 and 4. I don't believe this condition disappears so my concern would be that once the pupils move to KS3 and 4 the level of support is reduced.</p> <p><b>R40</b> There was excellent provision at BHBS Keilder until 5 years ago.</p> <p><b>R45</b> I strongly believe that better provision for autistic pupils needs to be provided in mainstream and specialist schools. This can only be done if significant funding is used to increase integrated and specialised Hubs, teaching staff and appropriate neuro-diverse learning environments in mainstream schools particularly. I appreciate that this would be a huge financial outgoing but strongly believe that it would be a valuable investment for children - giving them the best possible chances to learn in ways that best suit them (SEN &amp; neurotypical pupils) , be themselves, be happy, confident moving forward through to secondary provision which nurtures their needs and allows them to grow into happy, healthy adults.</p> <p><b>R48</b> See comments for Q6 - same applies</p>	<p>We will simplify where possible but this respondent has misunderstood the question, which is about resource bases attached to mainstream schools, not special schools.</p> <p>Service provision response, not necessarily capital. But noted.</p> <p>We agree, transition needs to be well managed.</p> <p>There is no space at the school to expand this provision.</p> <p>Create a glossary of terms</p> <p>This comment agrees with the strategy, that the KS4 provision needs to be examined.</p> <p>Refers to Bishops School removing in-house Kielder provision, a decision made by BHBS school leaders.</p> <p>Agreeing with proposal to investigate gaps in provision</p> <p>Agrees with proposal but disappointed in timescale for their particular child.</p>
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**Q7 Comment overview – one request for simplified text, one request for a glossary, two comments about current provision at Bishops School, some points ref service provision. Action simplify where possible, provide a glossary, pass service comments to head of Additional Needs**

### **List of all actions proposed**

- **Simplify text in strategy where possible**
- **Provide a glossary**
- **Pass observations and concerns ref service delivery to Head of Additional Needs for inclusion in the SEND strategy consultation**
- **Clarify proposed increase or decrease in places in each proposed improvement**
- **Discuss responses to proposed consultation on closure of Westfield Sixth Form with Director and AD of C and F, Scrutiny Committee and other relevant members.**
- **On completion of above, amend document as necessary and submit to scrutiny for recommendations.**
- **Produce final strategy and submit to Cabinet for decision to adopt.**



## **Title of report: Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 23 March 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and families**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards Affected:**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

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

To review the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership annual report 2019/20 (appendix C) and to seek the views of the children and young people's scrutiny committee.

### **Recommendation(s):**

**That:**

- a) The committee reviews the improvement plan and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure further improvement; and**
- b) The committee reviews the Safeguarding Children's Partnership annual report and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to influence the work of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership in future.**

## **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions 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 1 December 2020 that provided an update on the progress against the overall improvement plan for Safeguarding and Family Support 2019 / 2020 that was developed to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward. This includes further actions to improve the service and moves beyond the initial actions from the 2018 Ofsted inspection. The actions from the Ofsted improvement plan have been incorporated into the individual services' plans. This is to ensure that the continued focus on improvement is driven forward and that this is embedded to take account of the cross cutting actions that all services are required to deliver against; for example, the timeliness of visits and completion of both case and personal supervision.
3. 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 e and f). In addition to this we have implemented a monthly meeting with team managers to review and provide appropriate challenge to continue our improvement journey.
4. The impact of COVID19 has been significant over the period. National guidance has been followed and in some areas Herefordshire has adopted a COVID19+ approach in relation to public and staff safety. Staff have contributed significantly to the response to COVID19. Visits to vulnerable children and families have continued where necessary with use of PPE and following local and national guidance. The council continues to review our approach to service delivery and staff safety and wellbeing; staff have in the main been working from home.
5. Herefordshire has continued to implement the recommendations from external high-performing Partners in Practice (PIP), from both Doncaster and Essex Councils in 2019 and further work with Essex took place in 2020 to support our improvement and has the commitment from the DfE. This took place in spite of the impact of COVID19 with reviews being carried out with our looked after children's; child protection; and assessment teams, MASH and the newly launched (September 2020) Early Help hub. These reviews were all completed with colleagues from Essex virtually and the positive improvement in CP Court work recognised since the visit in 2019. Our improvement plan takes this work forward and puts it into practice.
6. Early Help has developed considerably since the introduction of Herefordshire's Early Help Assessment (EHA) which replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There are 1422 EHAs (December 2020) compared with 500 CAFs in January 2018. Families with emerging or more complex needs below the threshold of requiring statutory intervention are identified and assessed using the EHA. The assessment is of

the whole family and identifies their unmet needs then an outcome focused support plan is drawn up with the family to bring about sustainable change and leave the family stronger for the future.

7. The link between Early Help and the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been strengthened to further ensure families receive the Right Help at the Right Time by the formation of the Early Help Hub (EHH), launched on 21 September 2020. The EHH is located beside MASH in a building (currently due to Covid-19 the EHH is working virtually). The EHH takes all contacts with no level of need identified, all level 2 & 3 contacts, including level 3 Multi Agency Referral Form's (MARF's) thereby ensuring families are offered the 'Right Support at the Right Time' and releasing MASH to spend more time on investigating threshold and level 4 cases. In November 2020 the EHH telephone line was launched for children and their families and professionals. In December 2020 the EHH completed 270 contacts and met their target of 95% contacts completed in 72 hours and handled 314 telephone calls.
8. Ofsted noted in 2018 that a significant number of contacts were signposted away from children's social care, which would indicate that too many children were being referred that did not reach threshold for intervention. There has been a change in the reporting of Contacts. Police Notifications of Domestic Abuse at levels 2 and 3 are dealt with by the Domestic Abuse Hub. In Q3, 506 Police Notifications of Domestic Abuse went to the Domestic Abuse Hub. 100% were dealt with within 48 hours. Ofsted also noted in 2018 that Domestic Abuse notifications are not triaged prior to them arriving into MASH and that the process potentially could have left children at risk or not responded to in a timely manner. Work has been undertaken with partner agencies to develop a process that effectively manages the Domestic Abuse notifications. This was enhanced during COVID-19 to respond to a possible increase in Domestic Abuse incidents. This has now been reviewed and a new process has been agreed by partner agencies.
9. On 1 September 2020 the new process commenced. Domestic Abuse meetings take place on a daily basis with partner agencies on Domestic Abuse incidents that have been assessed at level 2 and 3 according to the Level of Need Response and Guidance Document. Level 4 domestic abuse incidents are investigated by MASH. Safelives have been consulted and further discussions are planned to consider their models and utilising their training opportunities.
10. In Quarter 3, MASH received 1,028 contacts. 95.76% were dealt with within 24 hours. 19% were accepted as level 4 referrals; this is below the target of 20%. Quarter 3 has maintained consistency in contacts converting to referrals. In December 2020, the Safeguarding Partnership launched the Right Help, Right Time, Level of Need document. Training has been provided for multi-agency professionals. The Early Help and MASH teams have been involved in delivering the training.
11. Herefordshire's Partners in Practice from Essex spent time in the Assessment Teams in In November 2020, Herefordshire's Partners in Practice from Essex observed the Early Help Hub and MASH. Although it was early days of the Early Help Hub being in place, Essex gave positive feedback regarding good management oversight, the timeliness of contacts being completed and the information gathered within the contact so a decision

can be made. Essex gave some observations of how improvements could be made to which Early Help and MASH implemented a work plan to make the improvements.

12. Strengths-based practice is starting to have an impact on improving outcomes for children subject to child in need and child protection planning, as well as children subject to PLO and court proceedings. More children who are subject to care proceedings are achieving permanence plans outside of care, including through reunification, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and adoption. More work is needed however to achieve SGO at the end of proceedings. Safety planning is more evident in practice and risk is being more confidently 'held' and proactive, collaboratively reduced.
13. The quality and frequency of case supervision have improved over time but this is not consistently recorded in a timely way. More case supervision records evidence plan progression to improve children's outcomes, through setting and reviewing decisions and actions. Personal supervision data is not consistently recorded which impacts on the performance data and does not reflect the reality of the work being undertaken. Permanent worker ratios have improved significantly due to the recruitment of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs).
14. The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 3 there were 337 children in care which equates to 93 per 10,000, which is significantly higher than the national average (65 per 10,000) and that of statistical neighbours (54 per 10,000). The number of looked after children has been fairly stable over recent months but has reduced slightly during the quarter.
15. Care orders have been discharged for 15 children in the Children and Young People in care teams in this quarter - 7 children was reunified and 8 children became subject to SGO's. At the end of quarter 3 - 19 applications were filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the care system. There were 8 SGO applications and 3 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are a further 5 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications filed with legal services. 9 children have been formally long-term matched.
16. Timeliness of visits within the children looked after teams has improved with the exception of Children in Need (CIN) visits. This relates to delay in closing cases which could be easily avoided. The report to support management pathway plans was amended when the Signs of Safety workflow was launched. This includes an amended Pathway plan. Together with the appointment of Senior Practitioners to complete Pathway plan reviews it is anticipated that both timeliness and quality of pathway plans will improve during Quarter 4 and Quarter 1 of 2021/22.
17. Improvements have been made to provide clear quality assurance reports and revise our quality assurance framework to align to Signs of Safety practice. This includes such innovations as collaborative case audits that are done alongside practitioners rather than separate. This fosters a more dynamic learning situation to help workers learn the importance of reflecting their good work with children and families using clear language that children and young people could understand and shows we care. The new framework also includes a twice yearly practice week whereby various audit,



appreciative enquiries (celebrates good outcomes for children), practice observations, listening to what children and families say about us, and involving our multi-agency partners. This includes everyone from our support and social workers up to our director and chief executive. It is a live and dynamic way of getting a sense of how well we deliver our support and what difference it makes to the children and young people we support and care for.

18. The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The report is published by the three statutory partners: Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. These agencies are jointly and equally responsible for putting in place effective arrangements to support the co-ordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of activity to safeguard children in the county. The partners have published this report as required by statutory guidance.
19. Following a review of the previous HSCB arrangements, and in wide consultation with relevant agencies, members of the existing Board and its sub group members, new partnership arrangements were introduced in September 2019. Working together 2018 provided guidance and flexibility in developing local children's safeguarding arrangements following the Alan Wood review. Within these arrangements the safeguarding partners sought not only to reduce duplication and streamline arrangements but to maximise the opportunities the legislation offers to increase clarity around strategic leadership and accountability for improved outcomes for children. Primarily, the work of the partnership is to promote high standards of safeguarding work and to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement and focus on the interagency safeguarding system. Through its work the partnership will identify and act on identified weaknesses in services and measure how improvements are having an impact on children & families.
20. The new partnership arrangements are called the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The lead safeguarding partners (Council, CCG and Police) in Herefordshire come together to provide overall strategic leadership and direction to the arrangements; this is captured within the overarching delivery plan. Throughout the development of the new arrangements, they emphasised that their new shared lead responsibilities will in no way diminish the importance of the responsibilities and contributions of all the other agencies in Herefordshire who play such a vital role in safeguarding children & young people.
21. Following a highly engaged period of consultation and review, the number of sub groups overall has reduced, with quality and effectiveness being placed at the centre of these arrangements. The centrality of the role of early years settings, schools and colleges, and the challenges of enabling wide representation and engagement of these settings has also been recognised through the consultation and as a result the existing education and early years groups are encompassed within the new model. In addition, to enable children's needs to be met consistently by the most appropriate service the partnership have launched the 'Right help Right Time' document in December 2020 following a significant period of interagency consultation.
22. This report includes the improvement plan up to the end of quarter 3; following the meeting in December of the committee the timings of the meetings has been reviewed to ascertain if they could be aligned more closely to the end of the quarters; having considered these and re-aligned some of the forthcoming meetings we have also

included the most up to date available monthly scorecard at appendix f for the committee's review

## **Community impact**

23. 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.
24. 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 and the Corporate Delivery Plan, 2020 to 2022 objective:CO2.2: Continue the improvement of the children's safeguarding system to ensure children and families get the right support at the right time, including early help and reduce the number of children needing to be cared for by the council.
25. 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

## **Environmental Impact**

27. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

## **Equality duty**

28. 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.

29. 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, we pay due regard to equality legislation.
30. 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 individual needs are assessed and assisting children and young people and their families to access services to meet their needs.

### **Resource implications**

31. 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.
32. 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 has been implemented.

### **Legal implications**

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

### **Risk management**

34. 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 Inspecting Local Authority Children's services (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.

35. The risks to successful delivery of the plan are:
- a. If insufficient resource is identified to implement the action plan in full. If this occurs there is a risk that the council will not deliver sustained improvement.
  - b. Change in culture and practice does not take place quickly or robustly enough and is not sustained. Accurate performance management information that is used at least weekly to manage and improve service delivery is a critical part of culture change, alongside capacity, training and development, audit work and changing practice as a result.

## **Consultees**

36. 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.
37. We have completed a survey looking specifically at feedback from children and families looking at the outcomes received as a result of our services. This has provided us with rich qualitative data that will be used to enable us to continue our journey of improvement and influence our plans; and will be repeated at regular intervals.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020/21

Appendix B – Our priorities definitions

Appendix C – Herefordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Annual Report 2019/2021

Appendix D – Herefordshire Children’s Safeguarding Social Work Self-Assessment to the end of quarter 3

Appendix E – Safeguarding and Family Support monthly scorecard December 2020

Appendix F – Safeguarding and Family Support monthly scorecard January 2021

## **Background papers**

None Identified

## Executive Summary

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

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

*Includes:*

- Following the implementation of the domestic abuse hub and the early help hub the percentage of the contacts into these areas and MASH that are being dealt within timescale has improved significantly. From quarter 1 at 68.1% to 84% in quarter 3.
- Caseloads have reduced and are at the lowest levels in 12 months at with only 11% of social workers holding more than 20 cases.
- Recruitment of permanent social workers has been consistently above 80% for seven months and was at 86% at the end of the quarter
- Numbers of children who are looked after continues to fall (8 children had been successfully reunified home and 8 children became subject to Special Guardianship Orders)
- 90% of risk management meetings held no more than 12 weekly or young people at moderate risk of child exploitation (Suggest we replace with this encouraging measure particularly as there is a focus on CE)

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

*Includes:*

- % of staff supervision reported at 85% on average for all teams (91% for operational teams and 98% for business support); there remains a concern around % of case supervision carried out as 83% of cases with a child in need plan, 86% of child protections cases and 82% of Children and Young People in care cases are reported
- Repeat referrals into MASH; this continues to be monitored as it remains high at 23% in December; however, the percentage has fallen over the quarter and we are coming in line with our comparators
- At the end of the quarter a review was held on practice arrangements for children going missing and return home interviews. Also a wider systems and process review around our child exploitation service and a move towards the measurement of quality and outcomes (keeping young people safe). From December these changes started to be implemented and progress will be reported on in quarter 4.
- All risk assessments and risk assessment management meetings for child exploitation being completed within timescales is of concern; revised systems and guidance are being implemented (part of the above work). . Progress against children at moderate risk of exploitation is highlighted under “what’s going well”.
- The number of children not seen within the 3 day timescale as part of the child and family assessment process is of concern and was reported at 25% not being seen in December

## What actions are we going to take over the next quarter? (SMART actions to be progressed) – ACTIONS delivered in Quarter 3

### *Includes:*

1. Implement the review that has been completed on child exploitation and missing services so systems, processes and targets more meaningfully and realistically capture practice. This will include work on measuring quality and outcomes for young *people* **Completed - Lead Louise Bath (interim Head of Service of Safeguarding and Review)**
2. Complete work on reviewing reducing numbers of children subject to a child protection plan. **Completed - Lead Louise Bath (interim Head of Service of Safeguarding and Review)**
3. Multi-disciplinary audit with Safeguarding Partnership, on child exploitation and smoother transitions into adult services (more seamless). **Completed - Lead Andy Gill (AD)**
4. Complete review of young people who could potentially be reunified with their birth families and supporting action plan. **Completed - Lead Gill Cox (Head of Service)**
5. Deliver training and practice development work linked to Signs of Safety on improving analytical skills in the Assessment service. **Commenced and will continue during quarter Q4 Lead Sue Rogers (Head of Service).**

## Actions for Quarter 4

### *Includes:*

1. To continue the training and practice development work with the assessment service to improve the analytical skills to analyse need and harm of children – **Lead Sue Rogers (Head of Service)**
2. Launch and implements new signs of safety mosaic system to support signs of safety practice; to reduce the duplication and time in order to make the system support our practice – **Lead Andy Gill (AD)**
3. Analysis of feedback survey from Children and families on the quality and impact (outcomes) of services received across Children's Services – **Lead Joe Davenport (Principal Social Worker)**
4. Ensure children's files on Mosaic has an updated Signs of Safety case summary – **Lead Andy Gill (AD) and Liz Elgar (AD)**
5. Improve the recording of personal and case supervision – ensure that the supervision that is undertake is recorded at the time of supervision – **Lead All Heads of Service**

# Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

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

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

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



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

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

## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**


(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

<b>Priority 1</b>					
<b>Getting it right for children and families first time</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve priority</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Statutory Visits to children will be completed within timescales	Looked after child (LAC) visits will be completed to timescale. Target 95%  <b>LAC visits average Sept 2018 – March 2019 : 79%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 86%</b>	Q1:2020/21: 94% Q2: 2020/21: 92% Q3: 2020/21: 94%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers. Lead:-Gill Cox</li> <li>2. Team Managers review the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Gill Cox</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on children</b>	Child in need (CIN) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%  <b>CIN visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 53%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 70%</b>	Q1:2020/21: 88% Q2: 2020/21: 90% Q3: 2020/21: 86%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers. Lead:-Sue Rogers</li> <li>2. Team Managers to review the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Sue Rogers</li> </ol>		
Children are seen to be safe and well, their voices heard, and they can develop a trusting relationship with their social worker	Child protection (CP) visits will be completed to timescale. Target of 95%  <b>CP visits average Aug 2018 – March 2019 : 77%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 82%</b>	Q1:2020/21 94% Q2: 2020/21 91% Q3: 2020/21: 92%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance data regarding visits is circulated on a daily basis to Team Managers on a daily basis. Lead:-Cath Thomas</li> <li>2. Team Managers to review the data. The data informs of visits due and overdue visits. Team Manager ensures the Social Worker is visiting and recording the details of the visit on MOSAIC. Lead:-Cath Thomas.</li> </ol>		





## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>All contacts received into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be assessed within 24 hours of receipt into MASH. We will strengthen MASH by temporarily adding an additional social worker to the establishment.</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Risk will be identified and no child will be left at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>117</p>	<p>Target of 95% of contacts dealt within 24 hours of receipt into MASH will be met.</p> <p><b>Outturn 2019/2020 : 44.2%</b></p> <p><b>Early Help Hub</b> Target 95% of contacts to be completed in 72 hours.</p>	<p>Q1:2020/21 24hr: 68.1% YTD Q2: 2020/21 24 hr: 79.5% YTD Q3: 2020/21 24 hr: 84% YTD</p> <p>Month of December 2020 outturn 98%</p> <p>A process of recording Domestic Abuse Notifications at level 1, 2 and 3 is established. It is recorded as a notification of Domestic Abuse: Lead-Sue Rogers</p> <p>Early Help Hub went live on 21/09/2020. Early Help Hub established to process Level 2 &amp; 3 contacts and level 3 Multi agency referral forms. Phase 2 of the EHH commenced on 2nd November 2020 – telephone advice, guidance and support line for professionals and families.</p> <p>Early Help Hub manage all contacts with no level of need attached.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation of Signs of Safety contact and referral steps. Going live on 25<sup>th</sup> January 20. Lead:- Sue Rogers</li> <li>2. Sustain meeting of the target of timeliness of contacts being completed within 24 hours. Lead:- Sue Rogers</li> <li>3. Daily meetings between MASH and the Early Help Hub to take place to discuss cases moving between MASH and the Early Help Hub. Lead Sue Rogers and Nicky Turvey</li> </ol>		



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

		<b>Q3: Early Help Hub completed 99.7% contacts within 72 hours against the target of 95%.</b>			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Risk assessments are completed within timescales where risk of exploitation has been identified	90% of exploitation risk assessments completed within 15 working days	Q1 2020/21 : 27% Q2 2020/21 : 33% Q3 2020/21 : 41%	1. Monitor and take action to further increase the timeliness of risk assessments. By end of quarter 4 achieve at least 60%. For context, risk assessments are completed by children social workers, and monitored by team managers and respective HoS. Several timeliness measures will be incorporated into accountable team scorecards. Lead: Salwa Farid		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited		New target of 15 working days commenced in December 2020 to be in line with our comparators, which resulted in an upturn in performance.			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Risk management meetings are held within prescribed timescales	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	October 2020:17% November 2020: 22% December 2020: 50%	1. Monitor the impact of the new Panel system. Work is still needed to ensure that children's social worker request a meeting once they complete the assessment. Lead: Salwa Farid		
		December 2020- MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel) launched. One of the main functions and purpose of the Panel approach was to ensure timeliness of risk management meetings.  A clear system is now in place, Risk management meetings should be completed now			


## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

		<p>within 10 working days following a “meeting convene request” from the child social worker.</p> <p>The MACE panel meets twice every week and chaired by the Safeguarding and Review HoS to ensure that each child is presented to the panel in a timely manner.</p>			
<b>Impact on Children</b>	90% of risk management meetings held no more than 12 weekly for young people at moderate risk of exploitation	<p>Oct 2020: 100%</p> <p>Nov 2020: 71%</p> <p>Dec 2020: 100%</p> <p>Close monitoring and corrective actions has led to greater consistency in this target being met.</p>	<p>2. Maintain consistency around target being met. Lead: Salwa Farid</p>		
Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Safety plans are developed in a timely manner during and following risk management meetings	90% of safety plans provided and distributed within 5 working days of a risk management meeting	All children and families are provided with a safety plan that they can take away from their risk management meeting. This is then uploaded to documents on Mosaic. Currently the safety plan step is embedded within the meeting minutes which impacts on data reporting. All meeting minutes are signed off by the chairs and are distributed within 48 hours of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of terms of reference for direct work including quality assurance of interventions for young people and families. This will include feedback on service delivery and whether our care and support made a difference. We will incorporate outcome focussed measure (staying safe) into monthly scorecard. Lead: Salwa Farid</li> <li>2. Safety plans will be distributed within 48 hours and minutes within 5 working days. Lead: Salwa Farid</li> <li>3. Safety Plans have been audited in Q2 and were not consistent therefore further development is required in Q3. Not completed. This is to be</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Young people will receive an effective response and support to prevent them from being exploited or further exploited.					




## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

		receipt into business support. More robust tracking of this will be implemented in quarter 4 and corrective action taken where there are delays.	carried over to Q4 via the MACE panel. Lead: Salwa Farid 4. Moving forward the Safety Plan step will need to be separated from the minutes of the meetings in Mosaic so we are able to capture and reflect the true timescales for children and families receiving their safety plans. Lead: Salwa Farid		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Children who are reported missing and are found receive an effective response and their views are heard  120	The target for completion has been realigned to comply with national guidance and the expectation is that:  90% of children, irrespective of them currently receiving a service will offered a return home interview within 72 hours of being found.	Oct 2020: 82% Nov 2020: 83 % Dec 2020: 79 %  Ceased completing return home interviews where we did not hold corporate parenting responsibilities, this led to greater capacity to meet the needs of our children with a significant improvement in performance from an average of 50% in the previous quarter to 81% this quarter.	1. Monitor and take any further action to reach target of 90% in Q4. Lead Salwa Farid.		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
IRO is effective in ensuring care plans are appropriate to meet needs and do not drift  <b>Impact on Children</b>	90% of cases have at least 2 IRO oversights recorded within a 12 month period  <b>Outturn 2018/19 83%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20: 84%</b>	Q1 2020/21 : 75% Q2 2020/21 : 75% Q3 2021/21 : 75%	1. IRO case note completion reviewed monthly within supervision on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO. Weekly performance data identifies children with less than two oversights in twelve months or no oversights in the first four months of being Looked After and		

# Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

	100% of formal disputes resolved within 20 working days		<p>A total of 49 dispute resolutions have been raised during 2020/21:</p> <p>Q1 - 29 Q2 – 8 Q3 – 12</p>	<p>this raised with the IRO by the Principal IRO. This work is under close scrutiny and further work is being undertaken to streamline the Mosaic performance data. Lead: Louise Bath</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit of the quality of IRO Oversights between Child Looked After Reviews to be completed during Q4.</li> <li>Performance Indicator to be amended to record a minimum of 4 IRO Oversights in a 12 month period; with the first report being produced at the end of Q4. Work is underway with the performance team to pull the data accurately from Mosaic.</li> </ol>		
Children’s plans do not drift and their progress is overseen by their IRO. Where issues are identified that are preventing plans for children progressing, these are acted upon swiftly by using the escalation process, evidencing IRO grip on the progression of children’s care plans.		Covering Delegated Authority, completion of Care Plans and Pathway Plans for Looked after child reviews and the completion of Matching assessments.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data will be raised in supervision with IRO’s to ensure oversight is recorded through individual case trackers. Lead: Louise Bath</li> <li>Dispute Resolution process to be further developed on Mosaic to cover the process through informal &amp; formal process through to resolution. Lead Louise Bath</li> </ol>		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>	
We will establish clear transition pathways for vulnerable young people so they receive the services they require to assist them in adulthood.	There will be an increase in young people who receive services when entering into adulthood.	Report requires further work to be accurate RAGB status based on qualitative information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further work to get more accurate quantitative data to be undertaken in quarter 4. Lead 16+ team manager Stacie Lane</li> <li>Young people leaving care will have an up to date Pathway plan which is reviewed at least every 6 months – Lead: 16+ team manager Stacie Lane</li> </ol>		  	
<b>Impact on Children</b>						
Young adults, vulnerable to risk will receive services to						








## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

123		<p>End Q2: 125 End Q3: 127</p> <p>Thematic audit on re-referrals completed.</p> <p>Family support role has been embedded in the assessment teams to work with families to provide support at the earliest point of statutory intervention.</p> <p>Early help assessments have continued to be completed through lockdown which is positive. Children and families continue to be identified, assessed and support put in place.</p> <p>Early Help Hub went live on 21/09/20. Target 95% of contacts to be completed within 72 hours.</p> <p>Q2:100% of contacts received completed in 72 hours. Q3: 99.7% of contacts received completed within 72 hours</p>			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>

## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**



(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

We will developed an edge of care service, to enable children to reunify to and/or remain with their families	We will have a fully functioning edge of care service.	A full team of in-house ECHO workers has been appointed who have begun to transition to their new roles.	1. Multi-disciplinary posts (Women's Aid and We Are With You) will be recruited – Head of CP Court		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Fewer children will enter the looked after system	16 children on the edge of care have been supported and 10 have not come into care.	2. Development of KPIs and performance framework for ECHO – Head of CP Court		
Children will be enabled to remain within their family network, or return to their family network where safe to do so, maintain their links with kin and community.	More children will leave the looked after system	32 children from 21 families are being supported as part of a plan of reunification and 22 have returned home.	3. Communications and engagement re ECHO practice model and pathway – Head of CP Court 4. Covid19 has impacted commissioning timescales for externally provided elements of the service, but progress is being made.		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will ensure children receive early help swiftly where this is the appropriate service, by establishing an early help hub in MASH.	Increase in children receiving early help intervention. <b>Outturn 2018/19 : 1088</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 1295</b>  Early Help Hub will contact families and make a decision on at least 95% contacts within 72 hours	Early Help: Sept 2020: 1309 Dec 2020: 1422  The Early help hub went live on 21/09/2020 with induction and training completed.  Q3: 99.7% of contacts were completed in 72 hours.	1. The Early Help Hub will be fully functional by the end of Quarter 3 – with the second phase of the hub to be open for telephone advice, guidance and support to professionals and families by 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020. Lead: Nicky Turvey  2. Early Help will contact families with consent and make a decision on at least 95% referrals within 72 hours – Nicky Turvey		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Maintain target of 20% contacts converting to referral.	Contacts to Referral (year to date %):	1. Multi agency monthly performance meeting will continue to review consistency of application of threshold: Lead: – Sue Rogers		
Issues will be addressed at the earliest opportunity with the lowest level of intervention where appropriate and safe to	<b>Outturn 2018/2019: 17.4%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 21%</b>	Q1 : 19% Q2: 18% Q3: 18%			





## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

do so, to prevent escalation of issues for children. Children will wait no more than 4 weeks to receive a service.	Decrease in re-referrals <b>Outturn 2018/19 : 31%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 20%</b>	End Q1: 21% Q2 : 26% Q3 : 23% Thematic audit on re-referrals completed			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children who don't need to be looked after will be supported to return to their parents care or to be cared for outside of the looked after system via adoption or Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).	Number of looked after children leaving care will increase to that equivalent to or above statistical neighbours. Numbers of looked after children will decrease.	Care orders have been discharged for 16 children in the C&YP in care teams in this quarter – 8 children had been successfully reunified home and 8 children became subject to SGO's.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice tools and standards shared with all staff involved in developing permanence plans – Lead: Cath Thomas</li> <li>2. Training on foster to adopt and writing CPRs will be delivered by ACE to relevant social workers – Lead: Cath Thomas</li> </ol>		
Impact on Children					
Children who can be safely cared for outside of the looked after system can grow up within a family without state intervention.		<p>At the end of December 19 applications were filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the care system.</p> <p>There were 8 SGO applications and 3 care order discharge applications filed with court. There were a further 5 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications filed with legal services.</p> <p>Review of all children in care not long-term matched to see if they could be reunified home was completed in October.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Monthly review of children who may be able to be reunified or leave care via an SGO will continue to avoid drift – Lead: Gill Cox Monthly reviews have been completed and will continue.</li> <li>4. Permanence plans submitted to the second LAC review to establish clear and safe plans out of the looked after system – Lead: Cath Thomas</li> <li>5. Learning arising from review of all children in care who are not long-term matched to consider if they can be reunified to their parents care will be shared by end of March – Lead: Liz Elgar</li> <li>6. A review of children in care who are long-term matched to consider if they can be reunified to their parents care will be completed in March – Lead: Gill Cox</li> </ol>		



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will ensure children who are privately fostered have their needs assessed and are visited appropriately to assure their safety is assured	We will know exactly how many children in Herefordshire are privately fostered and will be able to report that arrangements for their care is appropriate and that they are safeguarded. A monthly report will be provided at SMT to report on private fostering activity in Herefordshire, and report on trend in this i.e., increasing or decreasing.	2 Child currently in private fostering	1. Report has been developed that provides an overview of all children that are privately fostered and gives SMT the oversight needed to understand this cohort fully and work has been undertaken to raise awareness. Lead Sue Rogers		
<b>Impact on Children</b>		Report on private fostering to be presented to SMT on a regular basis from quarter 2; some reporting has been developed and is due to commence being shared at SMT in quarter 3			
Children who are privately fostered will be safely cared for outside their family.					
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<b>Priority 3</b>					
<b>Record appropriate and full information to ensure that we meet the identified needs for children and families to support and achieve outcomes</b>					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children and family assessments will be completed within 45 days	Assessments will be completed within timescale. Target 95%	Q1 : 90% YTD Q2 : 91% YTD Q3 : 88% YTD	1. Action for Q3 – Review all cases closed in September and October 2020. Timeliness of assessment will be reviewed and any key themes for improvement identified. Lead: Sue Rogers Update 14.01.21 - Completed.  2. Performance meetings to continue to take place on a weekly basis, where assessments that are out of date or nearly out of date are discussed and reasons identified. Performance meeting will		
<b>Impact on children</b>					
Children will be seen, their voices heard, and their level of need identified in a timely manner	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 80%</b>				



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(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

		taking place (Sue Rogers) to avoid drift and delay. Update 14.01.2021 – Dip sampling has taken place as planned.	continue on a weekly basis. Leads: Team managers Update 14.01.2021 – Completed and to be continued in Q4.  3. New action 14.01.21 - Continue to encourage social workers to input their day three visits in the child and family assessment as soon as they have been undertaken. Lead: Sue Rogers.		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will use performance information to interrogate practice and performance, to inform progress against improvement plan targets</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>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.</p>	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. Team Managers report monthly to performance meeting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance reports will continue to be available on a weekly basis.</li> <li>2. Accurate and accessible performance information to be provided to Heads of Service in line with service priorities (Lead: Kath Austin-Bailey).</li> <li>3. Team Managers will be clear about their own team's performance, taking responsibility for this. They will address areas for improvement in consultation with their Head of Service and colleagues within their team, timescales around which will be clarified within performance meetings. (Heads of Service).</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>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 &amp; Performance monthly meeting</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p>	The RAG ratings in each plan will move from majority red to majority green	Plans are updated every quarter, so the process of reviewing performance and reporting on performance against plans is embedded.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heads of Service will update the AD/HoS meeting monthly, indicating areas of success and areas for on-going improvement. This will be supported by current and accurate data.</li> <li>2. Heads of Service will ensure that they scrutinise available data and highlight to the performance team areas of incorrect data in order for this to be corrected.</li> </ol>		





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As performance improves, children and families will receive services of a consistently high quality.					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Each HoS will provide a Self-evaluation (SEF) to report on overall service area activity on a quarterly basis	SEF will increasingly identify areas of good practice and strengths within service areas.	Self-evaluations have been completed for end of quarter 3.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heads of Service will complete a SEF by the identified deadline. This will be informed by accurate and current data (Heads of Service).</li> <li>2. Heads of Service will have a clear understanding of areas of strength and areas for development within their service. They will identify an action plan to address any areas where performance is not at the required level. (Heads of Service).</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b> Each service area will have an up to date and accurate assessment of its strengths, areas for improvement, and timescales to achieve improvement, so are continually driving forward to improve the quality of services.					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
A Mosaic improvement group will meet on a monthly basis to develop and improve the efficiency and breadth of reporting across children & families	Performance against timescale targets will improve.	The Mosaic Working Group continues to scope and prioritise Mosaic changes and is taking an active role in evaluating 36 new signs of safety workflows; to be incorporated in the signs of safety workstreams to ensure robust delivery.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing a clear evidence base, Team Managers from a broad spread of service areas will attend the Mosaic improvement group to report on difficulties or inefficiencies within the Mosaic system. Any action required to address this and associated timescales will be agreed within the improvement group meeting. (Team Managers).</li> <li>2. Analyse current systems and identify opportunities/efficiencies to enable better data extraction, modifying existing systems where necessary (Performance team).</li> <li>3. Signs of safety forms to continue to be developed and tested with input from end users. Lead - Carrie Guest.</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b> Processes to identify case progression for each child will be improved, so cases that may be subject to drift and delay are quickly identified.					




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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Looked after children reviews are held and records distributed within statutory timescales	95% of 1st children looked after reviews held within timescale  <b>Outturn 2018/19 90%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 84%</b>	Q1 : 100% Q2 : 100% Q3 : 89%	1. IRO's will notify the PIRO and operational Team Manager of all cases where the child's Care Plan is not available a minimum of 5 working days prior to the child's meeting. Lead Louise Bath		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	95% of 2nd and subsequent children looked after reviews held within timescale <b>Outturn 2018/19 84%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 89%</b>	Q1 : 90% Q2 : 90% Q3 : 97%	1. IRO's will notify the PIRO and operational Team Manager of all cases where the child's Care Plan is not available a minimum of 5 working days prior to the child's meeting. Lead Louise Bath		
Children will not experience drift and delay. Plans will be progressed due to reviews taking place within timescales.	90% of LAC review minutes written and distributed within 20 working days  <b>Outturn 2018/19 48%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 48%</b>	Q1 : 52% Q2 : 66% Q3 : 62%  Business Support distribute complete sets of minutes within 3 working days of receipt but delays can occur in signing off the final version.	1. Looked after children review minutes deadlines reviewed monthly in supervision with Principal IRO on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO. Data reporting remains 'after the event' and this still requires manual monitoring. Though there has been steady progress in performance from 48% last outturn to over 60% currently, this will be given urgent attention with Business Support to make a significant improvement. Lead Louise Bath and Karen Pugh		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Life story work and later life letters will be completed for every child moving to adoption in a timely manner.	The backlog of life story work and later life letters will reduce every month and be eliminated	All of the life story books or later life letters have been completed.	1. Monthly monitoring and review will take place to ensure that a backlog is not re-occurring. If this does re-occur, the head of service will develop a timely action plan to address. Lead: Gill Cox		





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<b>Impact on Children</b>		The backlog has been cleared. Successful elimination of the backlog to be sustained and maintained through on-going use of the Life story book and later life letter tracker on SharePoint.	2. Learning from audit of life story work in August 2020 shared with teams and topic for reflective supervision in C&YP in care teams. Will be re-audited to review progress in February 2021 – Lead: Gill Cox		
Children will be able to understand their own family and care history	<b>Outturn August 2019 was 42 outstanding</b>				
<b>Priority 4</b>					
<b>Ensuring consistency of decision making for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Strategy discussions will take place within timescales	Strategy discussions are held within timescale - target of 90%	Q1 : 97% Q2 : 97% Q3: 96%	1. To maintain the current outturn above the target of 95% - all operational HoS		
<b>Impact on children</b>	Risks to children and young people are assessed, and intervention agreed is effective in keeping them safe	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 97%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 97%</b>			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Section 47 (S47) investigations will take place within timescales Reduce % of Section 47 investigations that are NFA	S47 investigations will take place within timescales. Target 95%	Q1 : 85% Q2 : 79% Q3: 78%	1. Team managers use weekly data to pro-actively plan work – all operational HoS  2. Team managers will be challenged at monthly performance meetings regarding compliance with timescales for S.47's – management team  3. Deep dive audit completed regarding no further action from section 47 enquiry to be reported Q3 Lead: Hayley Brooks (Update 14.01.21– Complete).		
<b>Impact on children</b>	Levels of risk will be identified in a timely manner, and children will receive the most appropriate intervention to safeguard them, according to their needs, swiftly.	<b>Outturn 2018/19 : 34%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 67%</b>			
	Reduction of S47 that are NFA. <b>Outturn 2019/20 : 55%</b>  Target: TBC	Q1 : 52% Q2 : 46% Q3: 43%			

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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's) and Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC's) will take place within timescales	ICPC's and RCPC's will take place within timescales <b>Target 90%</b> <b>Outturn 2018/19 : ICPC 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 : ICPC 75%</b>	Q1 ICPC: 82% Q2 ICPC: 92% Q3 ICPC: 89%	1. S.47's are completed by day 10 to enable reports to be shared with parents prior to ICPC and conference takes place within timescale – Lead: Sue Rogers  2. Team managers use weekly data to pro-actively plan work – all operational HoS		
<b>Impact on children</b>					
Risks to children will be assessed, and services required to protect them will be identified and planned, so risk is reduced and children are safeguarded.	<b>RCPC 100%</b>	Q1 RCPC: 100% Q2 RCPC: 100% Q3 RCPC: 100%			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children look after Reviews will take place within timescales	Children look after will take place within target timescales 90%	Total Children look after reviews % in timescale. Q1: 90%. Q2 : 91% Q3: 91%	1. LAC review schedules reviewed in monthly supervision for each IRO – Lead: Louise Bath 2. IRO's undertake Midpoint File Checks to ensure progress is being made in respect to the child's Care Plan in order to prevent drift and delay. 3. SofS Quality Assurance Monitoring Form to be developed on Mosaic, Lead Louise Bath		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will not be subject to drift and delay	<b>Outturn 2019/20 : 88%</b>				
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Group Supervision will be held on a monthly basis, led by senior practitioners or managing practitioners, to aid and enhance learning and development	HoS will report in their improvement plans that group supervisions have taken place as required.	Group supervision has commenced across all services.	1. Dates for group supervision will be planned at least 3 months in advance – all operational HoS  2. SP/MP's to provide HoS with attendees and topics for reflective sessions on a monthly basis – all operational HoS		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children and families will benefit from improved service delivery					



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through social worker reflection on practice.			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All senior practitioners and managing practitioners will be trained in Signs of Safety model for reflective supervision so that they can lead on implementation of this model - PSW</li> <li>SP's and MP's have appropriate caseloads to enable them to have capacity to complete this work (maximum of 50% for SP's and no cases for MP's) – all operational HoS</li> </ol>		
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will enable CP Court workers to focus on CP cases, cases in pre proceedings and proceedings.	Maintain CP numbers @ 140-150 (appropriate number for Hereford demographic compared to statistical neighbours)	CP numbers @ month end: March 2020:108 June 2020: 115 Sept 2020 : 125 December 2020: 127	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to note that whilst we have increased the number of CP we are below the demographic compared to our statistical neighbours.</li> <li>Inclusion of data re CP plans ending in suite of weekly reporting – Performance Lead / Head of CP Court</li> <li>Audit to update our understanding of declining numbers of children subject to a plan and the shortening of time that they remain on a plan. Lead: Hayley Brooks</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>		Second CPP (within 2 years)			
Children who require intervention as they are at risk of significant harm will receive intervention that promotes their safety and wellbeing.	Decrease in repeat CP interventions with children	Mar 2020: 21% June 2020: 20% Sept 2020: 9.6% Dec 2020: 8%			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) recommendations from LAC reviews are agreed and progressed within timescales	90% of LAC review recommendations are completed and sent to relevant team manager within 5	Q1 : 73% Q2 : 85% Q3: 88%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looked after children review recommendation deadlines reviewed monthly in supervision with Principal IRO on the case actions tracker completed by each IRO to address performance.</li> </ol>		




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	working days of the review <b>Outturn 2018/19 73%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 77%</b>				
<b>Impact on Children</b>	90% of LAC review recommendations are responded to by the relevant team manager within 5 working days of having received them <b>Outturn 2018/19 65%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 72%</b>	Q1 : 92% Q2 : 88% Q3: 89%	1. Principal IRO continues to raise this with HoS to remind Team Managers of the timescales for responding to LAC Review recommendations within 5 working days.		
Children's plans will be progressed so they will not experience drift and delay and the best options for their future will be progressed swiftly.					
<b>Priority 5</b>					
<b>Policy and practice that enables good quality social work for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum)</b> <b>[Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
CP plans will progress through purposeful and effective multi-agency strengths based practice	90% of core groups will take place every 4 weeks	Data now available 40% within timescales but does not reflect practice. Performance impacted by the current process for recording, editing, approving, and copying to siblings. Circa 70 core groups somewhere within that process at any one time.	1. Data cleansing taking place as part of Mosaic SofS implementation and reporting will be changing significantly – Jan 2021. 2. SofS implementation will change the way plans are set out and reviewed – Jan 2021. 3. Further thematic audit of the quality of visits – April 2021.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Core groups will be chaired and recorded using the core group agenda	Dip sampling evidences that use of the core group agenda is improving but continues to be inconsistent.			
Children will have improved outcomes and will not experience drift and delay	Core groups records will be approved and distributed within 5 working days	RAGB status remains the same as previous month as we have not got robust data currently.			
	CP plans will have measurable and achievable actions				

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	<p>that have timescales and are easy for families to understand, and no more than 6 actions at any one time</p> <p>CP visits to children will be purposeful and reflect high quality, collaborative interactions with families, and direct work with children</p>				
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<p>CIN plans will progress through purposeful and effective multi-agency strengths based practice</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will have improved outcomes and will not experience drift and delay</p>	<p>90% of CIN reviews will take place within required timescales</p> <p>CIN reviews will be chaired and recorded using the core group agenda</p> <p>CIN review records will be approved and distributed within 5 working days</p> <p>CIN plans will have measurable and achievable actions that have timescales</p>	<p>Timeliness data not yet included in scorecard. Dip sampling evidences that use of the CIN review agenda is improving but continues to be inconsistent.</p> <p>RAGB status remains the same as previous month as we have not got robust data currently.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data cleansing taking place as part of Mosaic SofS implementation and reporting will be changing significantly – Jan 2021.</li> <li>2. SofS implementation will change the way plans are set out and reviewed – Jan 2021.</li> </ol>		


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	<p>and are easy for families to understand, and no more than 6 actions at any one time</p> <p>CIN visits to children will be purposeful and reflect high quality, collaborative interactions with families, and direct work with children</p>				
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum)</b> <b>[Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<p>We will consider permanence planning at the earliest opportunity upon agreement to issue care proceedings.</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children will not experience drift and delay. The most appropriate permanency option for each individual child will be considered at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>More children have appropriate permanence plans identified earlier in proceedings.</p>	<p>Legal planning meetings are now well embedded and support early permanence planning. 4 training sessions delivered by ACE to date with further dates being arranged.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further training on Fostering for Adoption and CPR writing being delivered by ACE Jan/Feb 2021.</li> <li>2. Early Permanence Hub developing 2 staff workshops re adoption planning – Q4.</li> <li>3. Social worker checklist for adoption planning being implemented – Q4.</li> </ol>		↔
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum)</b> <b>[Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<p>We will progress cases through pre proceedings and ensure actions identified are carried out to timescale. We will appoint an additional case progression officer to track cases and ensure they are working to timescales</p>	<p>75% of pre proceedings concluded within 12 weeks</p> <p>100% of pre-proceedings</p>	<p>Second case progression officer is now in post and as a result there is more capacity for case tracking and keeping records up to date. 69% of pre proceedings concluded in quarter within 12 weeks and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PLO performance reporting is being refined prior to implementation – Q4.</li> </ol>		↔




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<b>Impact on Children</b>	concluded within 16 weeks	100% in 16 weeks. Decrease in performance within 12 weeks due to challenges in completing some aspects of support and assessment in PLO due to the pandemic. Performance report is being refined.			
Children will not experience drift and delay. Parents will be clear what needs to change and timescales for children for changes to be made.					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will front load work to ensure when we do enter proceedings these can be concluded in a timely manner and with the most appropriate permanence plan for the child, avoiding long term foster care unless absolutely necessary	Maintain high performance in care proceedings concluding in 26 weeks. Increase in the number of children in kinship placements Increase in the number of children subject to SGO i) at conclusion of care proceedings; ii) within 12 months of care proceedings concluding Increase in the number of children returning home following care proceedings	Use of Family Network Assessment Record is increasing but more needs to be done to embed. Additional FSW resource in CP Court in place. CP Court retaining all cases where a plan of reunification SGO could be achieved within 12 months post care proceedings. Average length of care proceedings concluded Q3 = 25.02 weeks. Q3 54% (YTD average) children concluded care proceedings with a permanence plan outside of care. 28% kinship placements achieved SGO at end of proceedings (YTD average). Protocol for funding legal advice for family members with a negative pre-viability is now in place.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of GenoPro and the Family Network Assessment Record require further embedding.</li> <li>2. Family Network Assessment Record being built into Mosaic Jan 2021.</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will not be subject to extended care proceedings Children will remain within their birth families and where this is not possible, long term foster care will be the last resort					



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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will ensure cases are transferred without delay to the appropriate part of the service	There will be no unallocated cases.	Transfer Step now implemented in Mosaic. Transfer process between Assessment and CP Court has been reviewed in Q3. Other transfer processes are effective.	1. Transfer policy being reviewed – Q4 – Lead: Quality Assurance Manager		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will receive the right service from the right social work service at the right time					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will develop our intervention with children and young people at risk of exploitation and develop a multi-agency approach to address child exploitation and rebrand this as contextualised safeguarding.	Young people and children who are at risk of exploitation will have regular risk management meetings and safety plans.	The task and finish group report concerning child exploitation from the scrutiny committee has been published and the executive response to this has been agreed.	1. A comprehensive contextualised safeguarding training programme including Peer on Peer and Harmful Sexual Behaviour will be commissioned in Q4 to be delivered to all partners involved in next year Q1. Lead Salwa Farid 2. Introduce assessment tool for HSCB and review the support available for victims of HSCB, and Peer on Peer in general within The “Exploitation Team and WMRSASC”. Q1 for next year. Lead Salwa Farid		
<b>Impact on Children</b>	Police operations can take place if required on information gathered. Multi-agency prevent and disrupt activity will be effective.				
Children and young people at risk of Child exploitation are diverted or where necessary supported to reduce the risk of harm					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Identified improvement and learning activity from audits will be completed in a timely manner.	All identified learning activity will be undertaken within the month which follows the relevant audit. All improvement activity will be	Learning activity is regularly reported to AD/HOS meetings	1. Heads of Service to ensure that all learning and improvement activity from audits is captured in service improvement plans for the relevant quarter – all HoS.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Learning will inform and develop systems and practice, improving					



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services and interventions offered to children and families.	undertaken within 3 months of the relevant audit.				
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Bi-monthly learning events will take place to aid learning and development across the workforce, and embed a learning culture which informs development of good practice.	QA Manager report will evidence bi monthly learning events have taken place.	Bi monthly events are taking place as required. Attendance December 2020 – 37 staff over two sessions.  Q3 QA report will be reported at AD HoS meeting 03.02.21.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver bi - monthly learning events. Lead: Hayley Brooks</li> <li>2. Develop quarterly QA report. Lead: Hayley Brooks</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will benefit from having a stable workforce that is highly skilled					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
All practitioners will attend at least one training event or workshop per quarter (in addition to learning activity undertaken within their own service area)	All practitioners will maintain a CPD log to be reviewed with their manager on a quarterly basis as part of personal supervision, focussing upon their identified learning needs and how they have applied the learning in their practice.	Consultation re revised approach to supervision has been completed and proposal presented to AD/HoS meeting. Proposals to be implemented Q4, led by SW Academy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a CPD log – identified lead in SW Academy</li> <li>2. Consult on and implement revised approach to personal supervision to improve its effectiveness in relation to professional development and learning – SW Academy</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Impact: children and families will receive a high quality service from skilled and knowledgeable practitioners					

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Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Monthly audit activity will take place and will lead to sustained improvements in practice</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>All audit activity has taken place as planned (thematic/moderated/deep dive). Reports have been discussed at AD/HOS business and practice meeting monthly.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit framework is being revised to reflect practice under Signs of Safety. Collaborative case audit will begin March 2021. Lead Quality Assurance Manager Hayley Brooks</li> <li>2. Quality Assurance Framework has been revised and is to be embedded.</li> <li>3. Collaborative case audit pilot has begun with current forms. A pilot with the new mosaic forms begins March 2021.</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>Quarterly deep dive audits will take place focussing on a specific practice area but in all deep dive audits timeliness, quality and consistency of management grip will be measured</p> <p>Under proposed new framework, deep dive audits will take place during practice weeks (May and November 2021). Proposed theme for first practice week "right help right time".</p> <p><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Over time, a clear, detailed picture will be established as to the quality of practice, areas for improvement established and training required to support practice improvement will be</p>	<p>Quarterly deep dive thematic audits will take place as planned. Outcomes will be reported on to AD/HoS business and practice meeting and at CMM. Training programme will be informed by outcomes of deep dive audit and practice in specific service areas will improve.</p>	<p>Bi monthly learning events held in response to deep dive audit.</p> <p>During Q3 all audit outcomes have been reported at AD HoS meetings and CMM as planned.</p> <p>Training programme is currently being developed by the Social Work Academy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree theme for next deep dive. Lead: Hayley Brooks. Deep dive audit theme agreed as re-referrals. Deep dive audit week commences mid-October and due to report in Q3. Update 14.01.21 – Deep dive audit with theme of re-referrals completed October 2020.</li> </ol>		

developed, improving services to children and families across Herefordshire.					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children will be encouraged to participate in their LAC reviews in a meaningful way	90% of children over the age of 4 participate in their LAC review in some form	Q1 : 95% Q2 : 99% Q3: 89%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IROs to use telephone &amp; video calls with children and young people over the age of 10 years (due to Covid-19 restrictions) and direct visits to children under age of 10 years who reside in Herefordshire (where it is safe to do so). Lead Louise Bath</li> <li>2. IRO's to work with participation team to develop a SofS Words and Pictures Care Plan to support the letter written to the child. Lead Louise Bath</li> <li>3. IRO's to promote completion of the Child and Young Person's Consultation Form to their Review; and to explore making this more accessible for them to complete and return. Lead Louise Bath</li> </ol>		↓
Impact on Children	<b>Outturn 2018/19 84%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 94%</b>				
Children will be able to voice their views and inform their care plans.					
140					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Children will have the opportunity to consult with their IRO before their LAC review and will be provided with information about their rights and entitlements	85% of children have a consultation with their IRO as part of each LAC review	Q1 : 93% Q2 : 95% Q3: 94%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IRO's to identify cohort of children and young people (aged 4 and over) who do not routinely speak with their IRO prior to their Child Looked After Review; and to explore the reasons for this. Peer Audit to be undertaken to explore this further during Q4. Lead: Louise Bath</li> </ol>		↓
Impact on Children	<b>Outturn 2018/19 97%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/20 95.44%</b>				
The wishes and feelings of children will be heard, validated, and will be part of establishing plans for children.					




## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

<b>Priority 6</b>					
<b>A single practice approach that delivers and improves quality and outcomes for children and families (Signs of Safety)</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Signs of safety will be implemented across the council so there is a consistent approach across all partners in working with children and families.	Signs of safety is implemented, embedded and informs all practice across the directorate and partnership.	Completed introductory training for staff	<i>Please read alongside Signs of Safety detailed delivery plan:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with mop up training for those who have not completed 5-day training. Lead: Andy Gill</li> <li>Roll out the changes to Mosaic forms. Lead: Andy Gill</li> <li>Implement supporting practice standards. Lead: Andy Gill</li> </ol> <p>Focus for this quarter is a dedicated project that will consider how new technology and Mosaic can support practitioners to have more time for direct work with children and families; including embedding the signs of safety forms and practice.</p>		
<b>Impact on Children</b> A strengths based approach will be embedded across all agencies, relationship based social work practice will flourish, feedback will be positive, from families, partners and Ofsted.		Staff completed virtual 5-day training			
		Signs of Safety staff conference held to launch and celebrate progress. 250 staff and partners attended!			
<b>Priority 7</b>					
<b>The leadership of change to prioritise better quality and outcomes for children and families</b>					
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
Feedback and learning from audit activity will evidence improvement in the quality of social work practice on a quarterly basis.	Audit activity will show an increase in the % of work graded good: End June 2020 target; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50%% good.</li> <li>0% inadequate</li> </ul> End September 2020 target	Draft Signs of Safety Quality Assurance Framework co-produced with staff – good engagement/feedback.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete analysis of baseline survey results. Lead: Joe Davenport</li> <li>Sign off and implement the new QA Framework and audit programme etc. Lead: Hayley Brooks</li> <li>Implement next phase of baseline feedback surveys – staff and partners. Lead: Joe Davenport</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b> Practice will improve for children and families in Herefordshire.		Baseline feedback survey of children and families who have received a service has been completed (75 respondents). Initial results			


# Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% good</li> <li>• 0% inadequate</li> </ul> <p>End December 2020 target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% good.</li> <li>• 0% inadequate.</li> </ul> <p>End March 2021 target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% good</li> <li>• 0% inadequate</li> </ul>	<p>indicates evidence of good quality and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Successfully piloted collaborative audit tool.</p> <p>End June 2020: 37% good 58% RI 5% inadequate</p> <p>End Sept 2020: 1% outstanding 41% good 48% RI 10% inadequate</p> <p>End Dec 2020: 1% outstanding 37% good 51% RI 11% inadequate</p> <p>Quarterly reporting has begun. First report was shared with elected members November 2020.</p>			
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will increase our children's social work leadership and capacity to enable the council to have the capacity to improve.	We will be able to demonstrate appropriate workloads for staff and clear	Co-produced refreshed Core Offer to attract social workers to apply for jobs in Herefordshire.	1. Complete Workforce Strategy that will have action plan on attracting more experienced staff, reducing workloads, retention and career progression. Lead Andy Gill.		



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

<b>Impact on Children</b>	evidence of improvements in quality of practice being embedded in day to day work – evidenced by performance and quality measures improving and reported in this plan.	Draft workforce strategy produced but requires further work on retention and career progression etc			
Children will receive a high quality and timely service		All re-audits in the last quarter have shown an improvement in overall quality of practice.			
		% of workers holding more than 20 cases has been reduced down to 11% from a high of 18%			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
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 will report into AD/HoS meeting that there are no actions outstanding from timescale agreed.	Any overdue audit actions emailed by QA Manager to AD Liz Elgar weekly.  No overdue audit actions to report. Reported to AD/ HoS meetings.	1. Develop reporting system and monitor through SMT that audit action have been completed and recorded on child's record. Incorporate into quarterly QA reporting. Lead Liz Elgar.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
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					



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Team Managers will lead improving performance against KPIs, and report on to ADs in monthly performance challenge sessions	Monthly team performance scorecards will show areas of good practice and areas requiring management attention and development.	Monthly Performance support & challenge meetings have commenced in Q1 all team managers continue to take part and performance is seeing sustained improvement ,over 18 month s, in activity and timeliness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on practice quality through monthly meetings – highlight evidence for quarterly QA report. Lead: Andy Gill.</li> <li>2. Review options to keep monthly support and challenge meetings manageable and retain focus on performance accountability. Lead: Andy Gill</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>		Attendance at monthly meetings has been extended to include child exploitation, LADO, fostering, case progression and early help hub.			
The quality of service provided to children and families will improve as performance across all areas of the service improves.					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
The organisation will work be configured to change the culture of practice, to work with families, intervene at the lowest level of intervention where possible, and maintain children within their family network.	Our LAC population will decrease. Our CP numbers will stabilise. Audits will demonstrate a strength based approach involving families in plans at all stages.	LAC Population has seen a small decrease CP numbers have seen a slight increase in the quarter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the DLT Leadership Pledge; incorporate into SMT, AD/HoS meetings, Team Managers Support /challenge meetings, team meetings and supervision. Evidence of change in culture linked to Signs of Safety. Lead Chris Baird.</li> </ol>		
<b>Impact on Children</b>		Creation of family and child feedback survey is in progress.  Update – Survey has been developed. Survey will be “live” during late November/Early December 2020. Reporting December 2020/January 2021.			
Children and families will receive the appropriate level of service at the right time.					



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

Priority 8					
Sustainable workforce to provide continuity for children and families					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Every staff member will receive regular supervision <b>Impact on Children</b> Children will receive a high quality service and are safeguarded through plans and support which are effective  145	90% supervisions undertaken every calendar month  <b>Overall</b> <b>Outturn 2018/ 19 : 71%</b> <b>Outturn 2019/ 20 : 84%</b>	<b>June</b> supervisions: <b>86% overall</b> 83% operational 96% business support  <b>Sept</b> supervisions: <b>74% overall</b> 74% operational 75% business support  <b>December</b> Supervisions: <b>85% overall</b> 91% operational 98% business support  The data is being more routinely recorded on the supervision tracker.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal supervision to be recorded on SharePoint at the time of supervision is held. Lead: All Heads of Service</li> <li>2. Use monthly Team Manager Support and challenge meetings to drill down into what's helping and hindering and identify SMART actions for each team. Lead: Andy Gill</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
Recruitment of social workers, will mean caseloads will be at a manageable level to enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities and have time for direct work <b>Impact on Children</b> Children and families will receive an improved service as	Fortnightly caseload performance information will evidence all caseloads under 20.	% workers holding more than 20 cases.  <b>Overall 11% end Q3</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete review of recruitment of retention which will include specific actions on manageable workloads (see below). Lead Andy Gill</li> </ol>		



## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

social workers will have time and capacity to build relationships, reflect on issues and appropriate responses, with children and families					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We have put in place a range of measures to enhance salaries and benefits for social workers.</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Children benefit from having well qualified, committed social workers</p> <p style="text-align: right; vertical-align: top;">146</p>	<p>Vacancies will be filled and over time Herefordshire will recruit permanent social workers who stay</p>	<p>As at December 2020 Permanent 123.8 Agency 18 Permanent Vacancies 28.6 Empty seats 10.6 Fixed Term 6.2</p> <p>Review of systems and processes around recruitment complete. Core Offer to social work job market complete and being used for every advertised SW job</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Workforce Strategy. Lead Andy Gill</li> <li>2. Test Core Offer to job market to improve recruitment of permanent staff. Lead Andy Gill</li> </ol>		
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
<p>We will recruit newly qualified social workers (NQSW's) to complete an Assessed and Supported year in employment (ASYE) social workers.</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700;"><b>Impact on Children</b></p> <p>Herefordshire will increase the number of qualified, substantive social workers, reducing change in social worker for children</p>	<p>We will have a clear rolling programme of ASYE joining the organisation and ASYE completing their first year of practice.</p> <p>7 NQSWs who started their ASYE in 2018 and finished in 2019 6 NQSWs started in September 2017 and</p>	<p>NQSW's :- 2019/2020 Q1 = 3 Q2 = 3 Q3 = 3 Q4 = 4 NQSW's :- 2020/2021 Q1 = 17 Q2 = 20 Q3 = 0 Focus on recruiting new cohort of NQSWs has been highly successful.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver on revised ASYE handbook to ensure we maintain and effectively support current cohort of NQSWs going through ASYE programme. Lead Joe Davenport.</li> </ol>		


## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 DRAFT

(updated to end of quarter three, December 2020)

	finished in September 2018 3 NQSWs who started in June 2017 and finished in 2018	New Social Work Academy website is now under development			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will establish a clear social work career pathway to enable social workers to invest in a career in Herefordshire	We will retain workers in Herefordshire, and appoint to senior positions from within.	Data re current establishments, staffing and budget position being collated to develop a proposal, now being led by SW Academy.	1. Further develop careers progression framework. Lead Joe Davenport		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will benefit from having well qualified, committed and experienced social workers.		Work on career progression framework and aspiring leaders programme has started			
<b>Objectives to achieve aim</b>	<b>How will we know</b>	<b>End of quarter progress</b>	<b>SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]</b>	<b>RAGB Status</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
We will establish an apprenticeship scheme to train non-qualified workers to social worker level and will back fill posts for apprentices to enable them to maximise their study activities	The apprenticeship scheme will be operational, with all places filled.	6 apprentices started in Q4. Together with Adult services we have successfully retendered Apprenticeship contract	1. Plan for new cohort of apprentices (up to 5 starting in March 2021 - as part of Step-Up to social work initiative). Lead Joe Davenport.		
<b>Impact on Children</b>					
Children will receive a service from a suitably qualified social worker. Children will be able to build relationships with their					

## Safeguarding and Family Support Improvement Plan 2020-2021 **DRAFT**

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social worker, and will not experience unnecessary changes in the social worker allocated to work with them.					
Objectives to achieve aim	How will we know	End of quarter progress	SMART Actions / Focus for next quarter (3 maximum) [Identified lead for each action]	RAGB Status	Direction of travel
We will recruit an additional Quality Assurance (QA) manager to provide greater opportunity for quality assurance, feedback and learning	Additional QA manager will be in post.	Included in budget setting 2020/21. Funding secured.  Appointed interim QA officer to work alongside QA Manager to provide additional capacity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QA manager post coming to regrading panel in Jan 2021. Lead: Joe Davenport.</li> <li>Recruit to additional QA post immediately following regrading panel so both posts properly aligned. Lead: Joe Davenport</li> </ol>		
Impact on Children					
Children and families will benefit from improvement in intervention and quality of social work practice identified in QA activity.		Reviewed responsibilities and grading of current QA manager post and new QA officer post			

**Direction of travel key:-**



**Increase in improvement of direction of travel against previous quarter**



**Remained same as previous quarter**



**Decrease in improvement of direction of travel against previous quarter**



## Our Priority areas

### 1. Getting it right for children and families first time

Definition – Through the work of the front door (MASH, Early Help) to provide the right support and guidance to children, young people and families at home, and in their communities that ensures we deliver effective services; whilst working consistently to the levels of need.

What good looks like – Measurable evidence that children and families are receiving the right services that meet their needs at the right time and in the right way.

### 2. Keeping Children and families together where possible; including a reduction in our looked after children numbers

Definition – Early identification of families and early intervention to prevent crisis and to ensure that the home environments remain safe for children; early permanence planning for children who require it which sees long term foster care as a last resort; a focus on reducing the number of children in care and family reunification.

What good looks like – Measurable evidence that children and families are receiving effective support that keeps families together within their own community.

### 3. Record appropriate and full information to ensure that we meet the identified needs for children and families to support and achieve outcomes.

Definition – To do our work justice and to support children and families there is a need to capture our full activity in our records that reflects the child's journey.

What good looks like – Full and accurate records that clearly explain children's lived experience, the reasons for social work intervention, the decisions made about them and holds the necessary data to enable full reporting that drives improved outcomes for Children and Families. Use plain language that a child can read and understand.

### 4. Ensuring consistency of decision making for children and families

Definition – To use evidence to understand the children and family that will enable social workers and managers to take informed and consistent decisions based upon identified needs; decision making that is defensible best practice.

What good looks like – Appropriate decisions being taken and recorded in a timely and effective manner for all children and families that change their lives for the better

### 5. Policy and practice that enables good quality social work for children and families

Definition – Identifying best practice that informs policy making to improve outcomes for children and families that enables good quality social work to take place.

What good looks like – Social Work practitioners tell us that they feel confident and competent with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to reflect and learn in order to deliver good quality social work; effective work with regional and national partners with a focus on what works best for children and families.

### 6. A single practice approach that deliver and improve quality and outcomes for children and families (Signs of Safety)

Definition – Consistently deliver the sign of safety approach at the right standards with children and families; recognising and involving all key partners in achieving change.

What good looks like - A single practice approach embedded across Herefordshire that delivers better outcomes for children and families.

### 7. The leadership of change to prioritise better quality and outcomes for children and families

Definition – A culture of leadership and change that promotes practice leadership, performance accountability, and knows what good looks like that leads to better outcomes for children and families.

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

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

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

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

# **Annual Report**

## **2019-2020**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report which covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The report is published by the 3 statutory partners: Herefordshire County Council, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. These agencies are jointly and equally responsible for putting in place effective arrangements to support the co-ordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of activity to safeguard children in the county. The partners have published this report as required by statutory guidance and have asked me to review the report in my role as Independent Scrutineer; a role I took up in November 2019.

I have reviewed the report against the requirements of Working Together 2018 which determines that the report should:

- set out what partners have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice
- evidence the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- provide an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- detail the decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- set out the ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

I consider that partners have provided an overview of the activity that has taken place as a result of the new arrangements and also via the previous arrangements that were in operation for about half of the period covered by this report; however, the report is limited in detailing how effective these arrangements have been in practice. This is because the work of the partnership to date appears to have primarily focused on the completion of tasks through a range of sub groups; some of which have been successfully completed although partners report that the transition to the new arrangements created some delay in delivering agreed work programmes. More significantly, a focus on tasks or process on their own, will not, of themselves, result in sustainable improvements in safeguarding practice as these are dependent on a culture of shared accountability, visible leadership, and robust governance.

Positively, the report details the *impact* of the work of partners in terms of the delivery of early help support and this includes feedback from children who have received support at this level of need which is, in my view, the best way of measuring impact. The absence of performance data, including benchmarking, the lack of multi-agency audits to evaluate front line practice and data that evaluates the impact of training on practice means that the impact of partners working together to safeguard children cannot readily be discerned from the report. It is however important to recognise that this does not mean that children and young people are not being helped to achieve good outcomes in Herefordshire.

Partners have been transparent in this report and identified where progress has not been achieved. They have also reported activity to learn from serious child safeguarding cases and the actions planned to implement the learning from the Serious Case Review that was published in the period covered by this report. In future reports, partners will have the opportunity to more fully describe the *impact* of actions taken in response to the learning from serious child safeguarding cases.

Finally, whilst the report states that the views and experiences of children are considered in key decision-making forums for individual children e.g., Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews, statutory partners recognise that there is a need to develop an approach to seeking and utilising feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

As required by statutory guidance, this report will be published; it will also be taken through the appropriate internal governance structures in the 3 statutory partners. In addition, I recommend that the delegated representatives of the 3 safeguarding partners meet with their organisational lead representative to discuss this report so that these individuals, who are ultimately accountable, are both sighted on the work/effectiveness of the Partnership and given the opportunity to influence its future ways of working.

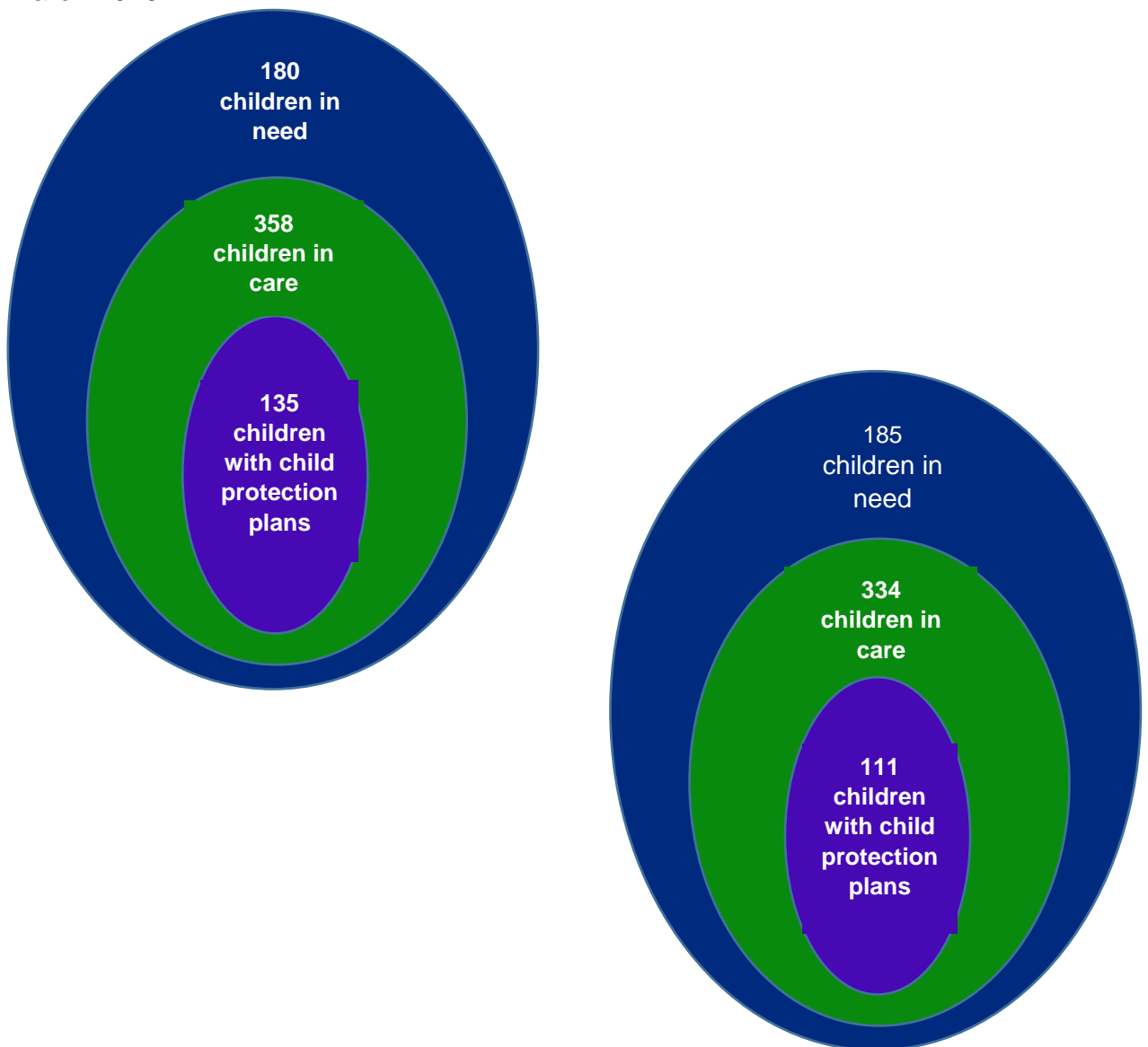
**Liz Murphy**  
**Independent Scrutineer**  
**December 2020**

This Annual Report covers the year 2019-20 and details the work that was originally commissioned by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board, which was the regulatory entity at the start of the year, which the replacement Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership concluded.

The reason and method for introducing this change will be detailed further within the report.

### The local context

Illustrated is the number of children assessed as in need, numbers of children with a Child Protection Plan and numbers of children in the care of the local authority as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020



This compared with the position at the end of 18/19, shows a small reduction in children in need over the year although children in care and children with protection plans has increased. This information is regularly reviewed over the year.

## Herefordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board

This multi-agency Board, which preceded the current Safeguarding Children Partnership, held a development day, reviewing information provided from all partners and set the strategic priorities for the year 2019-20.

It is important to acknowledge that throughout this transition period relevant partners have remained engaged in the shared vision that children are safely cared for by their family because services work well together, and with their families

The work to support the priorities was carried out by four sub groups who reported into an Executive group which was responsible for overseeing this, resolving any issues arising, breaking down barriers to implementation and reporting progress into the Board.

### Update on 2019-20 strategic priorities

The following tables outline the work that the sub groups have undertaken over the year to meet the strategic objectives as commissioned by the previous HSCB.

Strategic Priority 1: NEGLECT	The early identification and appropriate response to childhood neglect.
<b>Policy and Practice sub group</b>	Maintain up to date LSCB procedures that align with regional arrangements, legislation and statutory guidance.
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The Regional Safeguarding Procedures Group refreshed the regional guidance on neglect in 2020. The local Herefordshire neglect strategy expired in 2020. That document successfully launched the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) initiative to raise awareness and help identify and address child neglect in Herefordshire. Towards the end of 19/20 a dedicated task and finish group was commissioned to draft the new Neglect Strategy for the period 2020/23.</p> <p>The Policy and Practice sub group refreshed the multi-agency referral form (MARF) and the Threshold Guidance. Both documents ask the reader to consider child neglect in the household.</p> <p>During 2019, alongside Herefordshire Council colleagues, the safeguarding children partnership launched the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and support initiative to help families address neglect at an early stage. This early help approach sits alongside the GCP2 intervention as a completed GCP2 assessment is advised for completed EHA's where neglect is identified.</p> <p>Between April 2019 and the end of March 2020 35 EHAs were submitted identifying child neglect as a factor. However, anecdotally it is clear that completing the Assessment is the first stage in putting in place support for a family and subsequent engagement identifies issues such as neglect in the family home.</p>



<b>Strategic Priority 1: NEGLECT</b>	<b>The early identification and appropriate response to childhood neglect.</b>
	The Herefordshire Neglect Strategy for 2020/23 will address the issue of measuring the impact of neglect interventions for Herefordshire families as work is required to evaluate that impact.
<b>Communications</b>	Deliver a launch event for the HSCB Childhood Neglect Strategy and associated changes to business practice.
<b>Progress</b>	A Summit event focussing on child neglect is programmed for early 2021 to sit alongside the launch of the new Herefordshire Neglect Strategy.
<b>Training and Workforce Development sub group</b>	To continue to deliver GCP2 and to evaluate the effectiveness and impact on practice.
<b>Progress</b>	<p>Neglect and GCP2 training continued during 2019/20. Five multi-agency neglect GCP2 training sessions were held with a total of 75 delegates attending from various sectors and organisations including; Children and Families (Herefordshire Council), health, schools and education, independent service providers, the youth offending sector and the MOD.</p> <p>In addition, in June 2019, a workshop was held for 20 practitioners licensed to use the GCP2 tool that required some additional guidance to use the tool.</p> <p>All the GCP2 courses are evaluated to identify learning.</p> <p>During 2020 onwards there is a requirement to follow up to identify the impact of training practitioners to use the GCP2 tool and how this benefits the families they are supporting.</p>
<b>Performance and Audit sub group</b>	<p>Through case audit and performance information, report on the use of the GCP2 assessment tool and the extent of the understanding of neglect between partner agencies.</p> <p>Case audits to pick up on findings from SCR/ PLR's in relation to childhood neglect</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>Due to the changes in safeguarding arrangements which led to the Quality Assurance group being dissolved the scheduled audit did not take place.</p> <p>To be able to report on the use of GCP2 changes are required to the case recording system, this work is scheduled for 20/21.</p>
<b>Case Review</b>	Ensure the actions identified from previous SCR's and PLR's into childhood neglect cases are properly embedded within LSCB training (link to workforce development sub group) and action plans are properly completed.
<b>Progress</b>	The training officer continually updates the training offer with relevant findings from reviews.

<b>Strategic Priority 1: NEGLECT</b>	<b>The early identification and appropriate response to childhood neglect.</b>
<b>The voice of the child and family</b>	The evaluation of the GCP2 should include the views and experiences of children, young people and their families
<b>Progress</b>	The 2020/23 Herefordshire Neglect Strategy must address the issue of engaging with families, children and young people who are being supported to address neglect in the home.

### **Evaluation of progress and impact:**

During this year an additional 75 multi-agency front-line practitioners have been trained in GCP2. These practitioners are from Targeted Early Help, Social Care, Housing, schools and colleges, Early Years providers, Police and Health.

#### Evaluations from practitioners who attended the training includes:

- GCP2 helped to recognise the strengths and areas of improvement for families showing signs of neglect and support them to make changes to care for their children in the best way possible.
- This will give me aid my assessment by evidencing neglect
- A better understanding of families and procedures
- It will make a huge impact to my role
- Ensure relevant referrals are made and being clear in the type of help and support needed
- to be more accurate and objective in the way I assess family
- This will provide me with the tools and skills to support the parent within areas that need some support.
- More equipped
- Be able to advise more on the little steps
- It will help me to support other members of our team assessing neglect. It will make the information we submit to CS more universal and succinct
- Generally more aware of the potential signs of neglect and how this can impact a child/young person's life. Will be good to use this alongside other agencies working with the family and child.
- Enhanced knowledge and practice.
- It will support all the families I work with.
- Trying to think of more ways to provide the information as a setting not doing home visits! I do believe however that working with HV will help us use this tool effectively.
- Early intervention clarification
- It will help social worker understand more about the family environment

The use of the GCP2 is still low in Herefordshire. Two main reasons have been given for this:

- It takes time to build enough rapport with the family before this can be approached and
- The assessment being time consuming.

This feedback, and the low use of the GCP2 is consistent with the national findings. Research also suggests that full implementation of a new model can take two to four years.

A change to the local authority case recording systems to include a GCP2 marker enables practitioners to cross check that all children and young people on a plan for neglect have been assessed using this tool, which is proven to be effective in identifying neglect and supporting parents to recognise neglect and make the necessary improvements in parenting.

GCP2 tool has successfully been used in court proceedings to evidence continued neglectful parenting.

The use of GCP2 is well embedded within the local authority Early Help service and has contributed to successful outcomes for families:

- We have more routine and everything runs smoothly now.
- Showed me a different life style and looking forward to other things. Over coming stuff I didn't think I would.
- The household function more like a home, others are helping around the house and using the rota.
- It has helped organise the household and helped give me perspective to what is realistic to expect and what is achievable. And how to make achievable targets. Helped to clean up the house and garden which is much better now.

It is recognised that more work is required to embed the use of GCP2 across the multi-agency workforce and to better evidence the impact that this has on outcomes for children and families, this work will continue through 20/21.

<b>Strategic Priority 2: CHILD EXPLOITATION AND MISSING</b>	<b>Identification, prevention and response to Child Exploitation and children who go missing, County Lines, Trafficking, Slavery, digital exploitation and transitional arrangements</b>
<b>Policy and Practice sub group</b>	Review 'Children who abuse others' procedure and ensure appropriate guidance is available to practitioners within Herefordshire. Ensure policy and procedures around sexually harmful behaviour are promoted and multi-agency partners are aware of this
<b>Progress</b>	March 2020 saw the launch of a number of Herefordshire documents and tools to support practitioners identify child exploitation/ child criminal exploitation. These included; the multi-agency exploitation risk assessment tool, flow chart and the CSE / CCE Safety Plan Practice Guidance. In July 2019 the Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned the NSPCC to carry out a system wide audit on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) in Herefordshire identifying the prevalence and support available for victims and for those demonstrating harmful behaviour. Results from the assessment are due in 2020. The Regional Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures group updated the regional guidance on HSB and this is due for further updates in 2020/21. The Brook Traffic Light Tool is used and recommended for Herefordshire practitioners to use to help identify HSB. Agreed inter-agency local policies and procedures for managing children going missing and return home interviews.
<b>Child Exploitation and Missing sub group</b>	Sub Group to widen the focus of the group to identify the extent of and develop an understanding of Exploitation, County Lines, Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Digital Exploitation. Group to also review transitional arrangements of exploited children into adult services.
<b>Progress</b>	The sub group is currently finalising a prioritised plan for identification, prevention and support for children and young people vulnerable to and at risk of child exploitation. An updated dataset is in the process of being completed. Part of this plan will include involving young people in the process by gaining their feedback around what they feel they need to support them. Involvement of projects such as CLIMB will be integral in assisting with this. Funding proposal for dedicated CLIMB project agreed. Use this link to find out more. <a href="#">Climb   The Children's Society</a>  Work is also underway to look at how Herefordshire will raise awareness about the risks to young people and

	<p>what to be aware of- one of the outcomes will be for Herefordshire to launch specific publicity and communications for all agencies including its own branding to help focus this issue locally. Various funding options are being looked at to assist with this.</p> <p>A multi-agency task and finish group has been set up with some members of the group and other relevant agencies to look at the whole process of transition.</p> <p>Child exploitation service established and multi-disciplinary Prevent and Disrupt group to share intelligence and develop joint care and support plans</p>
<b>Training and Workforce Development sub group</b>	<p>For the group to scope what training exists, both multi and single agency in relation to areas of exploitation to include County Lines, Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Digital Exploitation.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership successfully launched the Contextual Safeguarding training course for professionals. This was developed by the Herefordshire Council Children and Families Directorate, West Mercia Youth Justice Team and the Partnership Team, and is co-delivered by those teams. Four courses were run between October 2019 and February 2020 for 76 learners from multiple agencies. Feedback from delegates was excellent and further evaluation will try to identify the impact the training has had on identifying and putting in place support for victims and potential victims of child exploitation</p>
<b>Performance and Audit sub group</b>	<p>Develop the quality of commentary accompanying the CSE scorecard.</p> <p>Through audit: Check the effectiveness of the response to previous CSE audit findings.</p> <p>To clarify police information that supports understanding of CSE.</p> <p>Annual audit to include cases where younger children have been exploited (under 10 years of age). Also to include cases where children who have been exploited have moved into adulthood (transitions).</p> <p>Understand the quality and availability of post abuse support to victims of CSE and other forms of exploitation. Identifying messages and lessons from case audits to improve practice</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary and Member spotlight review on CE (including peer on peer abuse) resulted in an action plan</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The quality assurance group undertook an audit into children who had gone missing 3 times or more in a 90 day period.</p> <p>Actions identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to reporting to ensure all professionals are aware when a child goes missing</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the local authority case management system</li> <li>• Improvements to the operational groups methodology in sharing appropriate information</li> <li>• Implementing a contextual safeguarding course</li> <li>• Improving attendance at risk management meetings.</li> </ul> <p>All other identified tasks within the work plan were not undertaken due to the quality assurance group being dissolved</p>
<b>Case Review</b>	Identify opportunities to review Herefordshire partnership response to 'peer on peer' abuse and identify/disseminate any learning for partner agencies.
<b>Progress</b>	A review of peer on peer abuse has been undertaken and is available on the Herefordshire Council website. The Partnership has also commissioned the NSPCC to work with partner agencies to audit their own responses to Sexual Harmful Behaviour (including Peer on Peer abuse) and produced an action plan to improve efficacy.
<b>The voice of the child and family</b>	Secure qualitative feedback from victims of exploitation and their families in relation to the services received/ experience of agencies to inform improvement in service. Led to development of proposal around a volunteer mentoring programme to meet the needs of young people.
<b>Progress</b>	The Prevent and Disrupt Group link directly with children, young people and their families. Their feedback is shared with the CE and Missing Group for consideration.

### **Evaluation of progress and impact:**

The improved policies and procedures for managing children going missing and return home interviews has led to earlier intervention, identification and access to the right support.

The spotlight review action plan progress is monitored and evaluated with measurable results in terms of development of safer practice for young people and improved outcomes.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funded a number of opportunities for practitioners to attend a day of training to raise awareness of a variety of topics including Vulnerability, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) / Gangs, Modern Day Slavery, Consent for Sexual Activity, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and other Criminal Exploitation, Appropriate Language and Use, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), GDPR / Disclosure and Pathways / Diversionary Tactics / Sharing of Intelligence

168 professionals attended this course.

Contextual safeguarding course was attended by 76 practitioners from assorted agencies, this develops an ability to understand and respond to, young people's

Evaluations from practitioners following the training include:

- To encourage early years practitioners and teachers to broaden their safeguarding knowledge by attending, realizing that younger siblings can be significantly affected by what is happening within the family.
- Amend my assessment framework and keep asking questions!
- It will inform the way I work with and support CYP and their families, the 1:1 and group support I deliver.
- I work with young people at risk of exploitation and unhealthy relationships so very relevant thinking of the wider picture of safeguarding and safety planning.
- By working in partnership and contacting relevant agencies when necessary using the correct procedures explained to me today.
- I work with many young people at risk of exploitation so this will help greatly
- Working with looked after young people between the ages of 16-18 years old this training was more than important as it applies directly to the young people I support.
- Having a greater knowledge, awareness and understanding of what contextual safeguarding is, how it is managed and what I can do as a support worker to ensure the safety of the young people I support has been thoroughly beneficial.
- In identifying risk and concerns to our young people within the context of where they live/'move around' i.e. through schools, parks, shopping centres etc. I am able to apply theories of contextual safeguarding to my approaches in working with young people and identifying risk outside of their home/school environments.
- Have a greater understanding of the issues raised in my work with families
- Awareness with everyday work with families, to look out for the signs. Know what to do.
- By being alert to information shared with me by young people which may indicate any risk of exploitation either related to themselves, or others

experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

The early work of the Prevent and Disrupt service has achieved measurable outcomes for young people e.g. keeping young people safe and in education, employment or training.

<b>Strategic Priority 3: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</b>	<b>Children with disabilities are safeguarded in all aspects of their lives and when in receipt of services. Ensure that any significant harm or likelihood of harm is recognised and responded to.</b>
<b>Policy and Practice sub group</b>	<p>Ensure that the Levels of Need document reflects the needs of children with disabilities.</p> <p>To ensure there is a common multi-agency procedure and guidance in relation to safeguarding children with disabilities.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	The Herefordshire Levels of Need / Thresholds document was updated in 2019 and includes information for consideration regarding children with disabilities.
<b>Communications</b>	To consider how best to communicate the message of how to safeguard children with disabilities
<b>Progress</b>	No specific communications have been developed with this message, if requested any of the HSCP documents could be adapted to an alternative format.
<b>Child Exploitation and Missing sub group</b>	To identify any particular vulnerable groups within this, i.e. Children with Disabilities and identify the responses.
<b>Progress</b>	The CE and Missing group aim to ensure that the responses available are suited to all children and young people regardless of age, nationality or disability
<b>Training and Workforce Development sub group</b>	Review multi-agency safeguarding training and single agency safeguarding training in terms of Safeguarding Children with Disabilities.
<b>Progress</b>	The Safeguarding Children Partnership targeted multi-agency training course called 'Working Together' is regularly updated and content included to inform learners of additional risk experienced by children with a disability.
<b>Performance and Audit sub group</b>	<p>Performance and Audit to devise an appropriate case audit tool to report on Children with Disabilities.</p> <p>Based on the report regarding CWB (presented to April 18 Board), to agree the performance information to be reported to the Executive.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The audit group include children with disabilities in all audits</p> <p>Performance information is available from the CWD team and was scrutinised at the quality assurance meeting for any outliers or anomalies. The sub group has now been dissolved.</p>



<b>Strategic Priority 3: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</b>	<b>Children with disabilities are safeguarded in all aspects of their lives and when in receipt of services. Ensure that any significant harm of likelihood of harm is recognised and responded to.</b>
<b>Case Review</b>	To highlight any findings from reviews relating to Children with Disabilities to inform actions and learning.
<b>Progress</b>	The sub group reviews the learnings from local and national reviews and where relevant uses these to update the local training offer and policies.
<b>The voice of the child and family</b>	Receive feedback from children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan or who are looked after, to understand the effectiveness of the local safeguarding system.
<b>Progress</b>	Views of children and families have been obtained both from meetings with professionals and through audit, this feedback has improved the experience of those children and families, making them more person centred.

### **Evaluation of progress and impact:**

All activities reported under other priorities also apply to the CWD priority, this was not managed as a standalone theme but included under Neglect, Child Exploitation and Missing and Early Help.

The one discrete activity that took place under this priority was a workshop. This was an independently facilitated event attended by 30 professionals from agencies including Childrens Social Care, Adult Social Care, Wye Valley Trust, 2gether Foundation Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group and Schools.

The workshop content was based on a serious case review carried out by an unnamed safeguarding board, Child Z a child with disabilities. Factors included the adversarial stance of the parents, mother's mental health and multiple agency input. Also included was an exercise around invoking resolution of professional disagreements policy.

Professionals at the conclusion of the workshop were posed a single question "What needs to change?"

From the responses there are four clear themes to consider:

1. Referrals and responses  
Suggestions include better feedback on MARFs that are NFA'd, clarity over thresholds, examples of what a good referral looks like, the need for a more meaningful discussion to take place in SPORT
2. Workforce development

Advanced communication skills training for all staff, specialist multi-agency safeguarding CWD training, multi-agency safeguarding supervision in particular around families continuously flying under the radar.

3. Information sharing

What, where, when how and to who? Framework needed for how to share information legitimately between professionals without informing parents.

4 Multi-agency meetings

There was clear desire for a forum such as this to better understand individuals' roles and responsibilities and to share ideas on better ways of working together

The responsibility for delivering the activities to address these sit within the children with disabilities team.

<b>Strategic Priority 4: EARLY HELP</b>	<b>The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children's needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.</b>
<b>Policy and Practice sub group</b>	<p>Update of multi-agency referral form (MARF) and Threshold guidance.</p> <p>Particular regard should be given to how the HSCB procedures address certain vulnerabilities in relation to children and young people's safety and well-being, for example children living with substance misuse, domestic abuse within the family and children with disabilities</p> <p>HSCB procedures support the early help strategy.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>During 2019 the Policy and Practice sub group refreshed the multi-agency referral form (MARF) and the Levels of Need / Threshold guidance. For referrals below level 4 / 3 advice is given to consider completing an Early Help Assessment.</p> <p>In 2019, alongside Herefordshire Council colleagues, the Safeguarding Children Partnership launched the Early Help Assessment and associated guidance. The Herefordshire Council Early Help Team provide training on how to complete an EHA.</p> <p>Work is required for the next 12 months to appraise the effectiveness of the EHA and early help support for those with additional vulnerabilities.</p>
<b>Communications</b>	<p>Raise awareness of early help support available and appropriate referral routes.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The information about early help has been updated on the council website and it is now more visible i.e. the number of tiles required to go through to access the information is less.</p> <p>WISH – Wellbeing, Information &amp; Signposting Herefordshire website. Resource has been put into improving the quality and amount of information for children, young people and their families on WISH. This is the place families are signposted to help themselves and address their own needs.</p> <p>Early Help business cards have been produced for the Police (accompanied with training), to hand out to families. The cards have information and the contact</p>

<b>Strategic Priority 4: EARLY HELP</b>	<b>The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children's needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.</b>
	details of the early help service to access information, advice and guidance or support.
<b>Child Exploitation and Missing sub group</b>	Cases where early identification of risk of CE is being identified by Early Help and responded to appropriately.
<b>Progress</b>	Early help shares intelligence at the group and gives advice and guidance of the services available through early help to the group. There are currently 40 active early help cases where CE has been identified.
<b>Training and Workforce Development sub group</b>	Continue to ensure that Early Help Practitioners attend HSCB multi-agency safeguarding training.
<b>Progress</b>	Early Help Practitioners have the opportunity to attend multi-agency safeguarding training.
<b>Performance and Audit sub group</b>	<p>Undertake multi-agency case audit whilst this remains a priority of the Board.</p> <p>Early help services are recognising and responding to early safeguarding concerns, reducing the risk of children suffering significant harm.</p> <p>Local authority Early Help practitioners are engaged in the GCP2 training and are using the tool in practice.</p> <p>To review, analyse and then report to the Executive and Board in relation to performance data provided through early help services.</p>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The local authority early help service has a comprehensive monthly audit programme. All audit actions are completed timely and checked through monthly supervision.</p> <p>A quarterly audit report is produced with analysis and actions which are followed up with all the teams through team meetings, supervision and training.</p>
<b>Case Review</b>	Use Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) learning to influence partnership activity to address modifiable risk factors to reduce the likelihood of future child deaths.

<b>Strategic Priority 4: EARLY HELP</b>	<b>The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children’s needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.</b>
<b>Progress</b>	CDOP in conjunction with the Case Review sub group identify both local and national learning and develop learning briefings for professionals
<b>The voice of the child and the family</b>	The early help services effectively identify needs and concerns relating to children and families, and services address these needs through effective planning and interventions to enable families to function effectively and children’s needs are met and they are supported to achieve their full potential.
<b>Progress</b>	Local authority Early Help practitioners capture the voice of the child in every contact and this is recorded on mosaic. When a case is closed all members of the family complete a service evaluation form, capturing their views of the service and the support they have received. The form is tailor made to the age group including smiley/sad faces for the under 5’s and scaling questions for the older children and parents. The evaluations are collated and analysed on a quarterly basis.

### **Evaluation of progress and impact**

The updated Multi-Agency Referral Form now signposts professionals completing this form to the Early Help service, ensuring greater take up.

The training from the local authority Early Help team in completing the EHA ensures professionals from all agencies are enabled to act as lead professionals in early help cases.

The updated information available both on the local authority website and WISH ensures both professionals and families understand what services are available to assist them.

The impact of the help provided is reported by families themselves. Quarter 4 2019/20 included 41 evaluations, 9 from the 5 -10 group where they all felt things had got better following the interventions. 10 from the 10 -16 group where they all felt happier at home, there were less arguments and it was easier to talk about their feelings. The average scaling score at the end of the intervention was 8.5 out of 10. Parents fed back positive comments about the service and the average scaling score at the end of the intervention was 7.9 out of 10.

Whilst outside the reporting period, the new thresholds guidance now relaunched as “Right Help Right Time” was launched at a virtual event along with a series of video clips to support decision making.

Over 220 practitioners / managers were in attendance from across the partnership. The overall feedback has been positive with the Partners already receiving feedback on how it has positively supported decision making and is having an impact on practice

## **Learning from Serious Case Reviews**

The case review sub group published one serious case review through 19/20. The key learning from the case was:

Escalation, there were many opportunities that were not taken

Actions:

- A new policy will be developed making clearer the route to resolution of professional differences,
- Training to introduce the new policy will emphasise the need for culture change to empower practitioners to respectfully challenge if not in agreement with decision making.

Professional practice: there were missed opportunities to better understand the lived experience of the child.

Actions:

- Improved recording of children and young people's relationships and sharing information with regard to alleged perpetrators
- Better use of risk management meetings and risk assessments to better understand cumulative risk
- Introduction of improved risk assessment tool that better informs with regard to risks outside the home environment.

Contextual safeguarding: Not all professionals understood the situation they were facing.

Actions;

- updated multi-agency training, building in additional strands of CSE, including criminal exploitation,
- provided information to practitioners about use of appropriate language to describe behaviours, not victim blaming
- Commission NSPCC to undertake Harmful Sexual Behaviour audit and produce action plan, to commence 2020.

Work streams were implemented in respect of the key learning:

A series of multi-agency learning events were held and these were attended by over one hundred and thirty professionals.

The case review sub group has also successfully implemented the new Rapid Review methodology introduced by Working Together 2018. There have been 5 rapid reviews undertaken through 19/20.

The rapid review outcomes identified learning for a number of agencies and follow-up of single agency actions has concluded that all agencies have implemented their actions.

Multi-agency recommendations have been made to address the learning identified, as a proportionate response. The learning has been included in existing work streams.

The outcomes from the reviews have been shared with the National Panel and in all cases they agreed with our recommendations

## LADO

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for the management and oversight of all enquiries into allegations against those working with and who volunteer with children in a Position of Trust.

339 contacts were received by the LADO during the period of 2019/2020. This is a slight increase compared with 2018/19 period where 293 contacts were made. 119 referrals met the criteria for LADO involvement in 2019/20. 52 referrals did not meet the criteria. 134 contacts were requests for advice or consultations regarding professionals working with children. 18 were LADO referrals that met the criteria and were referred onto LADOs in neighbouring authorities and 16 were forwarded to adult safeguarding as the subject in a position of trust worked solely with adults. Not included are the contacts regarding general safeguarding advice and safer recruitment.

Last year's annual report highlighted the need for continued LADO awareness raising to maintain professional awareness. Training and awareness raising has continued in 2019/20. Training has been provided to both independent, maintained and academy schools and the feedback from this sector remains positive with working relationships established.

[LADO Annual Report 2019-20](#)

## Training

The Business Unit has commissioned and delivered training on behalf of the Partnership, and over the course of the year has provided the following to delegates from many agencies including Childrens Social Care, Adults Social Care, Police, Fire and Rescue, Education and Health.

<b>Course</b>	<b>April 2018 - March 2019</b>	<b>Apr 2019 - March 2020</b>
Working Together	179	253
Child Protection Conference	41	50
CSE	42	7
Contextual safeguarding (replaces CSE)	N/A	76
GCP2	263	75
MARAC Awareness	65	0

Neglect Conference	95	N/A
Domestic Abuse	52	109
Practitioners Forums	136	359
Working to Stop FGM, FM, FGM	39	0
GCP2 Workshop	21	20
Making Safeguarding Personal	N/A	43
Taxi Driver Training	N/A	138
SCR Briefings	N/A	138
Total	<b>933</b>	<b>1268</b>

Between April 2019 and March 2020 HSCP had training places filled on 45 different learning events. This was despite the curtailed programme with events being cancelled in February and March 2020 due to extensive flooding in Herefordshire and the onset of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020.

During the year a number of courses had their content refreshed to reflect changes in policy and local child protection risk factors. The Contextual Safeguarding course was successfully launched in 2019 focusing on child exploitation and sexual assault. Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understand and respond to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Contextual safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems, recognising extra - familial risks requiring safeguarding response.

The HSCP also commenced exploitation and safeguarding training for taxi drivers. Working with Herefordshire Council Licensing and Trading Standards the course became mandatory for licenced taxi drivers and 138 drivers were trained at the latter end of 19/20. This will enable drivers to spot trafficking and the exploitation of young people.

2019/20 also saw the continuation of the multi-agency Practitioner Forums being held in Herefordshire. Five Forums were hosted with 359 delegates attending in total. Forum highlights included the June 2019 forum covering Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practice (128 delegates), the September session on Harmful Sexual Behaviour (79 delegates) and several dates of Exploitation and Vulnerability training with a total of 168 delegates.

## **Family feedback**

There is little evidence that has been made available to the partners with regard to involving children and families in ways of working, or how they have influenced the ways we work. The new strategic plan and accompanying delivery plan will strengthen the effort in making a difference to children, young people and their families. The preceding pages of this report have detailed the work that was originally commissioned by the previous Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board and continued under the new



arrangements. The partners acknowledge that some focus was lost over the transitioning period and this is reflected in the review of the arrangements (appendix 1 to this report).

It is also to be acknowledged that there are other influences that effected the delivery of the work of the Board / Partnership; the lack of a Business Manager with the focus that they bring, the impending restructure of the Business Unit, the flooding in February 2020 and the emerging pandemic.

## **New Safeguarding Arrangements**

Following a review of the previous HSCB arrangements, and in wide consultation with relevant agencies, members of the existing Board and its sub group members, new partnership arrangements were introduced in September 2019. Within these arrangements the safeguarding partners sought not only to reduce duplication and streamline arrangements but to maximise the opportunities the legislation offers to increase clarity around strategic leadership and accountability for improved outcomes for children. Primarily, the work of the partnership is to promote high standards of safeguarding work and to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Through its work the partnership will identify and act on identified weaknesses in services and measure how improvements are having an impact on children & families.

The new partnership arrangements are called the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The lead safeguarding partners (Local Authority, CCG and Police) in Herefordshire come together to provide overall strategic leadership and direction to the arrangements. Throughout the development of the new arrangements, they emphasised that their new shared lead responsibilities will in no way diminish the importance of the responsibilities and contributions of all the other agencies in Herefordshire who play such a vital role in safeguarding children & young people.

Following a highly engaged period of consultation and review, the number of sub groups overall has reduced, with quality and effectiveness being placed at the centre of these arrangements. The centrality of the role of early years settings, schools and colleges, and the challenges of enabling wide representation and engagement of these settings has also been recognised through the consultation and as a result the existing education and early years groups are encompassed within the new model. As they have always done, the lead partners will take responsibility for sharing the further development and chairing of the new groups.

To read the full account of the new arrangements as they currently stand and how they will work follow this link:

[New Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Arrangements](#)

A review of these arrangements has been undertaken and is available at appendix 1.

## **2020-2021 Strategic Priorities**

The Safeguarding Partners have agreed as priorities for the forthcoming year and will be concentrating multi-agency activity on:

- Neglect: We aim to recognise, prevent and reduce neglect to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Herefordshire
- Child Exploitation: We aim to prevent and reduce child exploitation and improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Herefordshire

- Right Help at the Right Time: We will seek to provide children and families with the right help and support at the right time through a coordinated multi-agency approach
- Leadership: Through the leadership of the three statutory Partners, promote a culture of collective responsibility, accountability and professional challenge built on guiding principles of respect and openness to forge an effective safeguarding children Partnership with strong governance, shared work practices and meaningful engagement with children and families.

## The Partnership Unit

To deliver the above, the Partnership Unit is used, which is a multi-agency funded team overseeing the work of the Partnership and its sub groups. The unit is funded as follows:

AGREED BUDGET FOR 2019-20	
Children's Wellbeing	133,569
Adults Wellbeing	103,000
Clinical Commissioning Group	80,190
West Mercia Police	53,510
Probation/CRC	6,136
CAFCASS	550
Youth Justice Service	1,144
<b>TOTAL GROSS BUDGET</b>	<b>378,099</b>

Contributions from statutory partner agencies for 2019-20 remained the same as in previous years at a total of **£378,099**.

**Note:** This total contribution is for the support of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership

BUDGETED COSTS FOR 2019-20	
Salary costs	278,814
Transport costs	1,300
Independent chair costs	38,520
Consultancy costs	34,200
Training expenses	28,000
Office expenses	65,781
Training income	-13,000
Total	433,615

The £55,516 overspend is largely down to the unprecedented number of safeguarding reviews that were commissioned during the year across the children and adults safeguarding arena and was drawn down from reserves.

The work of the Partnership continues to evolve, the Strategic Plan and associated work plans will be developed and shared with all relevant agencies over the summer months.

For continuity and progression the existing sub groups will continue to work on and help fashion the new priorities.

The Partnerships commission of the review of the new arrangements will align better to work plans and they will make the necessary amendments to ensure the effectiveness of the Partnership in delivering its vision.

## Our Vision:

*“Children are safely cared for by their family because services work well together, and with families”*

## Summary report of review of Partnership arrangements

### Background

The new Safeguarding Children and Young People in Herefordshire arrangements reflect the fundamental legislative changes to the Children Act 2004, which was amended by the Children & Social Work Act 2017. The changes are covered in the updated Working Together 2018, which sets out a number of changes in the way in which agencies are required to work together to safeguard children and young people.

The new arrangements for Herefordshire were outlined in a comprehensive plan which was published in June 2019 and was implemented in September 2019. Partners committed to review the arrangements in April 2020 and to publish any revised arrangements in June 2020 following that review.

### Methodology of the review

There was a delay in commencing the work as a result of the Covid Pandemic and the capacity for the Business Unit to support the process, consequently the review of the new arrangements ran from July 2020 – October 2020.

In order to provide a broad illustration of the impact and effect of the new arrangements, a range of evaluative activities were undertaken. These activities were:

- 1:1s with a range of professionals with differing roles
- Focus groups / subgroups
- Desktop exercise
  
- Analysis from undertaking elements of the '6 Steps to Scrutiny: *'a tool to reflect on the safeguarding children plan with desired outcomes, to look together at constraints and ways forward, to facilitate inquiry and collaboration in the best interests of children'*  
[Pearce, J (2019) *Six Steps for Independent Scrutiny: Safeguarding children arrangements. Institute of Applied Social Research, Luton, University of Bedfordshire*]  
– This includes
  - Three core partner leads are actively involved in strategic planning and implementation
  - The wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children
  - Children, young people and families are aware of and involved with plans for safeguarding children
  - Appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place for data collection, audit and information sharing
  - There is a process for identifying and investigating learning from local and national case reviews
  - There is an active program of multi-agency safeguarding children training

Through the review activities, the following list of measures were evaluated:

1. How effectively have the 3 statutory partners identified and communicated their strategic safeguarding children plan including the desired outcomes for children and families and progress made in delivering the plan?
2. The extent to which contextual safeguarding features in the strategic plan and the robustness of reporting and scrutiny arrangements for exploitation.
3. How effectively SCYPiH works with and alongside other strategic partnerships.
4. The degree to which the wider safeguarding partners (including relevant agencies) are actively involved in safeguarding children? (This includes voluntary and community sector, early years and education).
5. The level of contribution made by children, young people and their families to planning, service improvement and scrutiny/assurance.
6. The robustness of the quality assurance arrangements and the impact of independent scrutiny.
7. How well learning from serious incidents is identified and integrated into practice and service delivery and the relevance and impact of any learning opportunities available to front line staff.
8. Developing commitment to Signs of Safety as the practice model being adopted by the council and its work with partners.
9. The effectiveness of governance arrangements for work streams/programmes.

## **Findings**

The Signs of Safety core 3 questions have been used to group the findings for ease of analysis and proposing recommendations for future amendments to the arrangements:

### **1 - What's working well?**

The review found that there was a commitment and willingness to engage in the safeguarding agenda from partners and some evidence of willingness to engage in change to improve how they work.

There was recognition of a nucleus of good collaboration and partnership working within the structure and positively; a clear set of agreed values and principles to base their work on.

### **2 - What are we worried about?**

Without a strategic plan there is a concern that there is not a clear, shared direction for the partnership with no delivery plans in place.

With or without a plan, the absence of an agreed multi-agency dataset to analyse, a task and finish group to scope this has been commissioned and this will be available ongoing, and no true multi-agency audit activity taking place, although single agency audits are being produced and discussed across a multi-agency fora, there is a concern of not being able to evidence or measure how partnership activity and influence is making a difference.

It was also noted that when ensuring that the professionals undertake all of the processes to adhere to policy and procedure, the focus could be drawn away from the

child and family. Finally, as a result of the training contract ending with Hoople as part of the new arrangements no improvements to the training offer following findings from case reviews were made. Training as delivered from the existing pool of training providers continued to be delivered.

### **3 - What needs to happen?**

The review identified a strength in the partnership for a willingness to engage and to work together and it is therefore proposed that this ethos, together with the strategic oversight of the 3 Partners, will drive the improvements that need to take place as listed below:

#### To have governance fit for purpose with consistency and clarity on priorities and work activity

- Set up a delivery group ('engine room' of the Partnership) with key partner representation to consider the findings of the review and ensure the response for improvements are integrated into the delivery plan – March 2021
- For the delivery group to drive forward the development of the strategic plan and delivery plan - March 2021
- For the Partnership to publish the strategic plan and delivery plan - by March 2021
- For all subgroups of the partnership to have work plans in place, aligned to the strategic plan and delivery plan - by March 2021

#### Up and down leadership and co-ordination of effort on priorities of the Partnership – responsibility and accountability at all levels

- For the Safeguarding Partners to agree a revised governance structure proposed by the delivery group from the findings of the review - by March 2021
- Identified sponsors for key priorities and areas of work to be agreed by the Partners and published within the strategic plan to ensure progress and accountability of the partnership activity - by March 2021

#### To be more impact focused - how we are making a difference / measures of success

- To set up a Performance Group to agree a multi-agency dataset - by February 2021
- Secure the capacity for dedicated analyst support to draw together multiagency data - by April 2021
- Develop a multi-agency safeguarding dashboard with dedicated support analysis secured to provide an illustration of how well the partnership is keeping children safe – by May 2021
- An agreed programme of multi-agency audits agreed to feed into the Performance group – January 2021

#### To provide a learning and development offer

- To produce a Learning and Development Strategy that sets out the capacity for the partnership to provide a learning and development offer by end of February 2021

#### To ensure the learning from serious incidents is identified and put into practice

- To produce a revised approach to disseminating the learning from serious incidents – by March 2021

#### To engage with children and families to inform how we work

- Through the Development & Practice group, we will work with young people to co-produce an engagement strategy that sets out how we will ensure the views of children and young people and their families inform the work that we do – by June 2021
- Within this work, we will seek to adopt the national participation standards by September 2021

#### Partners to agree an annual programme for independent scrutiny

- In order to ensure an objective evaluation of the partnership and its agreed strategy is effectively undertaken, Partners will agree a programme for independent scrutiny by March 2021

#### To increase the level of engagement and involvement of wider partners

- As part of revising the governance, the delivery group to consider how senior leaders of relevant agencies can be better engaged in the work of the partnership – by March 2021

#### Development of the Partnerships values and behaviours into a pledge

- Work with children and young people to gain an understanding of what they think our partnership values and principles mean – by March 2021
- Develop a partnership pledge, informed by children and young people, at the Spring Summit - March 2021
- Test out the pledge through a range of activities identified at the summit and supported by the delivery group – by October 2021

### **Summary**

It has been agreed by the 3 Partners that finalising the Strategic Plan 2020 -23, (with an attached delivery plan) is imperative in achieving the appropriate response to the evaluation measures.

Once published, the delivery plan and associated work plans will identify the tasks and steps needed to be undertaken to address the improvements that need to be made.

It must also note that all areas of work will need to be either owned by a current group cited in the Partnership Structure or 'sponsored' by one of the 3 Partners to ensure close monitoring of progress and accountability.



## Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Social Work Self-Assessment to end of December 2020/2021 (DRAFT)

### **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 third quarter for the 2020/21 financial year.

The impact of COVID19 has been significant over the period. National guidance has been followed and in some areas Herefordshire has adopted a COVID19+ approach in relation to public and staff safety. Staff have contributed significantly to the response to COVID19. Visits to vulnerable children and families have continued where necessary with use of PPE and following local and national guidance. The council continues to review our approach to service delivery and staff safety and wellbeing; staff have in the main been working from home.

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 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 and further work with Essex took place in 2020 to support our improvement and has the commitment from the DfE. This took place in spite of the impact of COVID19 with reviews being carried out with our looked after children's; child protection; and assessment teams, MASH and the newly launched (September 2020) Early Help hub. These reviews were all completed with colleagues from Essex virtually and the positive improvement in CP Court work recognised since the visit in 2019. Our improvement plan takes this work forward and puts it into practice.

### 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 the Right Help at the Right Time.

Early Help has developed considerably since the introduction of Herefordshire's Early Help Assessment (EHA) which replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There are 1422 EHAs (December 2020) compared with 500 CAFs in January 2018.

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

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

Early Help is fully integrated with the Troubled Families programme (called Families First in Herefordshire), the EHA is linked to the troubled families criteria and outcomes for families to the Herefordshire Family Outcomes Framework.

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

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

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

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

The three specialist services have continued to support families and work with them to bring about sustainable change. Each service has followed their own organisations guidelines as to what they could do. The internal Early Help family Support team changed to virtual working with families at the start of Covid-19 except for families where there are concerns for example where the case was at risk of escalating into statutory services then face to face work was completed with the family in their home or outdoor space. These visits followed Public Health/Council guidelines and PPE was used if required. Work continued with all families by phone or using 'WhatsApp' video facility. As lockdown eased visits increased, support workers again were mainly working with families in their home or outdoor space following Public Health/Council guidelines. Now back in lockdown early help services have reverted to the procedures followed in the first lockdown with face to face work in family homes or Covid safe buildings reduced - in week 1 of lockdown 38 visits were completed.

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

The link between Early Help and the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been strengthened to further ensure families receive the Right Help at the Right Time by the formation of the Early Help Hub (EHH), launched on 21st September 2020. The EHH will be located beside MASH in a building (currently due to Covid-19 the EHH is working virtually). The EHH takes all contacts with no level of need identified, all level 2 & 3 contacts, including level 3 Multi Agency Referral Form's (MARF's) thereby ensuring families are offered the 'Right Support at the Right Time' and releasing MASH to spend more time on investigating threshold and level 4 cases. Any cases deemed to be level 4 by the EHH go directly into MASH and vice versa those cases on further investigation by MASH which do not meet threshold go to the EHH for signposting, advice and guidance or support through an EHA being offered as appropriate. In November 2020 the EHH telephone line was launched for children and their families and professionals. In December 2020 the EHH completed 270 contacts and met their target of 95% contacts completed in 72 hours and handled 314 telephone calls.

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 (EYSW's) who deliver one to one support in families' homes using evidence based intervention such as Let's Talk with your Baby, Communication Steps, Bookstart Corner, Solihull Parenting, and they can give guidance and support on, for example, healthy eating, dental health and immunisations. During Covid-19 this service continued to work remotely with families by phone and Whatsapp video conferencing and visiting when required e.g. case at risk of escalating and then following Public Health/Council guidelines. The service has now produced videos of some of their programmes so they can work through these remotely with families. As with the internal early help family support team as the Covid-19 restrictions lessened, work in

family homes increased. Now we are now back in lockdown the service has reverted to mainly working with families virtually and only completing work in the family home or outdoor space when absolutely necessary.

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

The Solid Roots programme is an investment to improve outcomes for foundation (0-5) children and families. This includes training for early years professionals to ensure children have adequate speech, language and communication skills so that they are ready to engage in school. Training early year's professionals in the Solihull Approach and purchasing Solihull licenses so all parents in Herefordshire can access Solihull parenting courses on line and training the early year's workforce in a range of areas to ensure all children reach a good level of development. During Covid-19 the training for early year's professionals has been moved to virtual training. 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 December 2020 there were 1422 early help assessments. Outcomes are measured through the Troubled Families programme's Payment By results (PBR's). In this years extension of the programme Herefordshire is performing very well. To the end of December 2020, 156 PBR's have been claimed 85% of Herefordshire's target for the year 2020/2021. At the end of quarter 2, Herefordshire was second in the West Midlands table of the % of PBR's claimed and 41st in the country.

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 are 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 1422 in December 2020.
2. Children Centre Services became integrated into Early Help and the EHA is now used to access the service. They are now supporting the most vulnerable families with children 0-5 years.
3. The measure is through Troubled Families payment by results. Herefordshire was second in the West Midlands by the % of PBR's achieved against the LA's target for 2020/21 for the first quarter of this fyear and 41st in the country.

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

1. To continue to develop the Early Help Hub including auditing, analysing the audits and acting on findings.
2. To develop a strength based approach within Early Help – Signs of Safety to be rolled out over the next three years. Training to early help staff has started, training to partner agencies is in the planning stage.
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

185	<p>4. The Early Help Hub went live on 21st September 2020 and in December 2020 completed 270 contacts and met their target of 95% completed within 72 hours. The EHH also completed 314 telephone calls.</p> <p>5. Two primary schools and one consortium of a secondary school and 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.</p> <p>6. All three specialist family support services are using the closure of cases with a 'Family Wellbeing Plan' This leaves the family with a plan of who to go to within their own network of family, friends and the community before requiring any specialist services, leaving them stronger.</p> <p>7. 77 early help cases with children under 1 year were audited by an Ofsted inspector whilst seconded to the council during Covid-19. He praised the tenacity of the workers, the case notes and the reflective supervision within early help.</p> <p>8. A partnership of Midwifery services, Health Visitors and Children Centre Services are working together to provide a package of enhanced support to young parents 21 years and under. This has just started and is called First Steps and offers a mentor for up to 2 years from an early years support worker and more regular contact with the young parent's midwife and health visitors.</p>	<p>web based portal. The portal was trialed in December 2020 and went live on 11th January 2021.</p> <p>4. To improve the knowledge of Herefordshire's community assets available to families and share this knowledge on WISH (Wellbeing, Information &amp; Signposting for Herefordshire) and with partner agencies. Phase 1 completed. Regular checking of information and sharing at Early Help Multiagency Meetings. Development work going on with Adults &amp; Communities Directorate to incorporate this area of work into the Talk Community and Community Hub service.</p>
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**Thinking about practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that the early help practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being early help practice has just lost its and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.**



Rationale for score 7

The Early Help Hub is performing well meeting its target of 95% of contacts completed in 72 hours since it started. The impact of reducing the number of contacts going into MASH is being evidenced. Troubled families payment by results target met in every month this financial year. The early help portal into Mosaic has gone live. First Step multiagency project has started to support vulnerable parents 21 years and under. To move this score up the scale the impact of the early help hub to be more fully evidenced. Troubled families payment by results to meet the full year's target.

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

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

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

OFSTED noted that a significant number of contacts are signposted away from children’s social care, which would indicate that too many children were being referred that did not reach threshold for intervention. There has been a change in the reporting of Contacts. Police Notifications of Domestic Abuse at levels 2 and 3 are dealt with by the Domestic Abuse Hub. In Q3 , 506 Police Notifications of Domestic Abuse went to the Domestic Abuse Hub. 100% were dealt with within 48 hours. OFSTED noted that Domestic Abuse notifications are not triaged prior to them arriving into MASH and that the process potentially could have left children at risk or not responded to in a timely manner. Work has been undertaken with partner agencies to develop a process that effectively manages the Domestic Abuse notifications. This was enhanced during COVID-19 to respond to a possible increase in Domestic Abuse incidents. This has now been reviewed and a new process has been agreed by partner agencies. On the 1st September 2020 the new process commenced. Domestic Abuse meetings take place on a daily basis with partner agencies on Domestic Abuse incidents that have been assessed at level 2 and 3 according to the Level of Need Response and Guidance Document. This is to ensure appropriate information sharing and support is provided for children and families. Level 4 domestic abuse incidents are investigated by MASH. Safelives have been consulted and further discussions are planned to consider their models and utilizing their training opportunities.

In Q3, MASH received 1,028 contacts. 95.76% were dealt with within 24 hours. 19% were accepted as level 4 referrals. This is below the target of 20%. Q3 has maintained consistency in contacts converting to referrals. In December 2020, the Safeguarding Partnership launched the Right Help, Right Time, and Level of Need Document. Training has been provided for multi-agency professionals. The Early Help and MASH teams have been involved in delivering the training.

The Head of Service for MASH and Assessment and Early Help visited Redbridge Local Authority in December 2019. Redbridge Local Authority are Ofsted rated “outstanding” and are achieving their target of 95% of contacts being completed within 24 hours. Work has been completed to strengthen our approach, learning from Redbridge to develop the front door. On 21st September 2020 we changed the process. All level 4 multi-agency referral forms are received into MASH. Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Herefordshire level of need response and guidance document are received into the Early Help Hub so targeted support can be offered to children and families.

All MASH 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, Child Exploitation Coordinator 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. It has been difficult during

Lockdown as agencies have worked remotely but the commitment has remained strong and effective. There is a plan to be based at Plough Lane once government restrictions are lifted.

In November 2020, Herefordshire's Partners in Practice from Essex observed the Early Help Hub and MASH. Although it was early days of the Early Help Hub being in place, Essex gave positive feedback regarding good management oversight, the timeliness of contacts being completed and the information gathered within the contact so a decision can be made. Essex gave some observations of how improvements could be made to which Early Help and MASH implemented a work plan to make the improvements.

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.

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 74.44% of children are seen within 3 days of the assessment being initiated. This is below the target of 95% and needs to improve significantly.

Time frames for Children and Family Assessments being completed are set at 95%. The Assessment Service are standing at an average of 80.66% completed within timescales.

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

To address the timeliness of 3 day visits, Children and Family Assessments and caseloads, the Head of Service and Managers have weekly performance meetings to ensure targets are met. Team Managers have a monthly meeting with other Team Managers, Heads of Service and Assistant Director's to present their teams data and they are challenged. They present what is working well and what challenges they have identified. It is a time when peers can offer solutions and support.

Herefordshire's Partners in Practice from Essex spent time in the Assessment Teams in September 2020. The feedback from Essex was they felt the Head of Service had a vision for the service as did some of the Managers and Senior Practitioners, They observed progress in the managers footprint on the Childrens files. Social Workers spoke about the children and families they work with and knew them well. Essex observed progress with the Children subject to Child in Need plans. Family Support Workers are allocated to the case to complete direct work. They saw regular visits to children. They noted further areas for development. They would have liked to have seen consistency of SMART Child in Need plans. They found family meetings did not always take place, family safety plans were not being put in place and poor quality of



assessments in some cases. In December 2020, a training programme for Team Managers, Senior Practitioners and Social Workers was put in place to address the findings. The Assistant Director and Head of Service are auditing Child and Family Assessments to look at the quality of the assessment.

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

A weekly performance report measures how many contacts that the service receives and the outcome of all contacts following the initial screening process. This has now been broken down to evidence the Police Notifications of Domestic Abuse that go to the Domestic Abuse Hub, the contacts that are sent to the Early Help Hub and the contacts sent to MASH. It measure the numbers being received, the timeliness of completion and outcomes.

Multi agency audits are completed to review cases that have not been progressed from contact to referral to scrutinize decision making. The outcome of these audits is presented 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 Scorecard provides information regarding trends, challenges and volume within the service and what is working well.

Social work practice in the MASH and Assessment Service is monitored through management oversight. Every MASH record, Children and Family Assessment, and s47 is signed off by a manager. Challenge of threshold is used as a learning mechanism both in supervision, team discussions, group supervision and multi-agency performance meetings. The data evidences that personal supervision within MASH and the Assessment Teams is at 88% and case supervision is 80.88%.

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

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

In April 2020, a pre-birth assessment audit was completed. 1 was good, 2 were requires improvement and 5 were inadequate. An area of strength was Assessment plans identified by Team Managers at the beginning of the assessment are clear and of good quality. To address this the actions were that an immediate review was undertaken of all inadequate rated cases to identify if immediate safeguarding action was necessary. All pre-birth cases that were closed with no further action from January 2020 until May 2020 were reviewed. Senior Practitioners to deliver guidance and training around use of the pre-birth handbook. A re-audit of pre-birth assessments will take place in January 2021.

In June 2020 a thematic audit was completed looking at re referrals into MASH. 1 was good, 5 required improvement and 1 was inadequate. Areas of strength were, Early Help support was offered to families in 6 of 8 cases, indicating that this support is being routinely offered. In cases where further assessment had been declined by parents, there is evidence of staff within the assessment teams adapting their approach in an attempt to engage parents while at the same time respecting their decision to decline



assessment. In 5 case examples, re-referrals were for concerns of the same nature as the previous referral. This may indicate that concerns had not been sufficiently explored within the preceding child and family assessment, or alternatively that referrers are reluctant to hold their concerns below level 4 despite previous assessment.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The MASH works to a well-established multi-agency model.
2. There are experienced social workers collating information from partner agencies to provide clear recommendations and defensible decisions.
3. Good responses to immediate harm to children between Police, social services and our multi-agency partners.
4. Strong threshold decision-making with good impact of social work and early intervention services.
5. Monthly case audits are undertaken across the management structure and recommendations put in place
6. The Domestic Abuse Hub is embedded.
7. The Early Help Hub is now in place.
8. Caseloads are low and consistent
9. Development of Child in Need work with the support from Family Support Workers within the Assessment Teams to ensure all children and families will receive the right services at the right time dependent upon the level of need. Family Support Workers will provide direct work with Children and families. Children’s views wishes and feelings will be heard and support provided to reduce the need for children to move to alternate accommodation-Family Support Workers have been recruited and trained.
10. Child in Need guidance has been reviewed and up dated with clear expectations.
11. 7 Newly Qualified Social Workers have been recruited to the posts in the assessment teams. Support will be provided by the Social Work Academy.

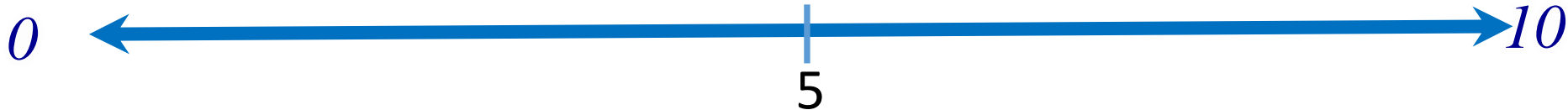
**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. The quality of assessment needs to improve. Managers need to work with the Social Worker to plan an assessment, ensure that the assessment has gathered all the information and is triangulated with family members and partner agencies. There needs to be a clear rationale, hypothesis and decision. A training plan has been put in place. Improvements need to be evidenced.
2. Child in Need plans need to be SMART and child focused. Signs of Safety training has been put in place and will be launched in January 2021.
3. Regular personal and case supervision has decreased. Improvements need to be evidenced. that it is taking place and recorded. 100% case supervisions recorded within 3 months by end of Q4. Staff will feel supported. The case direction will be closely monitored to reduce drift and delay. Head of Service will observe 3 supervision by the end of Q4. Senior Practitioners will provide reflective supervision individually and within a group.
4. Case summaries need to be on every case. This is so everyone has a clear summary of what the concerns are, what has been put into place and the safety of the child. Data will provide evidence that all cases has case summaries by the end of Q4.
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 timeliness of contacts. Findings are presented to the MASH Partnership Forum. This will evidence that Children and families are getting the Right Help at the Right Time.
6. Thematic audits will be completed. January 2021, Pre-birth Assessments.
7. Completion of strategy meetings, s47’s, Child and Family Assessments and 3 day visits to meet targets of 95% within timescales. – Head of Service 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.
8. 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 planned. All Team Managers, Senior Practitioners and Social Workers need to attend.

9. 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 Q4.

**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.**



Rationale for score 5

A significant amount of work has taken place to improve the quality and timeliness of the work completed within MASH and the assessment teams. Data and quality assuring work is showing some evidence of improvement. The score evidences some progress but to increase the score further progress needs to continue and then sustained to meet the set targets and to provide an excellent service for children and their families.

**Summary: Safeguarding and Review (Salwa Farid – 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)**

In line with many other local authorities, since the end of March 2020 the restrictions arising from Covid-19 has resulted in all Child Looked After Reviews and Child Protection Conferences being conducted via video conferencing. Children who are looked after continue to be consulted via webex, WhatsApp, email and telephone calls prior to their Review; and every effort is made to ensure children and parents are able attend the Webex video based CLA Review. Where parents / carers do not have access to equipment to aid their attendance they are either supported by the child’s social worker / fostering social worker in person to access the meeting with the social worker via the webex link; or the IRO conducts a series of meetings and consultation with parents happens prior to the Review; to gather the parents views about their child’s progress. IRO’s ask SWs to feedback the outcomes of the CLA Review to parents after the meeting has concluded.

Q3 saw agreement being given to IRO’s undertaking visits to children under the age of 10 years who are placed within Herefordshire. This was agreed to concerns being raised by IRO’s that this group of children found it more difficult to speak with their IRO via the telephone or social media. Similarly where parents do not have the technology to attend Child Protection Conferences; Child Protection Conference Chairs will attempt to consult with them both before and after the Conference. It is of

concern that the most vulnerable of parents and children are impacted by the challenges of participating through technology. The Service recognises the importance of developing a working relationship with parents and children; especially for those attending Initial Child Protection Conferences and Initial Child Looked After Reviews; and that there is a need to move to a position where hybrid meetings can be undertaken.

To date it has not been possible to move to a position of holding hybrid meetings; as Child Protection Conference Chairs need to have access to a Covid-secure meeting room to enable them, the parents, their supporters, child's social worker and the meeting note taker to facilitate face to face socially distanced meetings with video conference input from other agencies / individuals. While there is no current travelling time, IROs are reporting that Child Looked After Reviews and Child Protection Conferences are taking significantly longer in preparation conversations and in the meetings themselves, so there is no significant time saving from the new arrangements.

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

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

There has been a slight reduction in performance during Q3 in relation to ICPC's (see section on self-assessment); although RCPCs remain at 100% of all Child Protection Conferences being held within timescales each month. During Q3 86% of all Initial Child Looked After Reviews - this is down from 91% in Q2 and this was a result of parents being unavailable; lack of advocates to support parents; and due to late notification of the change to the child's legal status such that the service could not identify an IRO with capacity to chair the meeting in timescales. During Q3 83% of 1st Child Looked After Reviews were held within timescale; with 90% of Subsequent Child Looked After Reviews being held in timescale.

The service has shown a dip in performance from that evidenced in Q2 and this has been linked to meetings being reallocated to a new member of staff during November 2020 which could not be held in timescales due to the impact of their working pattern; and the need to reschedule some meetings. What is however, positive is that performance during December 2020 (96%) significantly improved; and this improvement should be sustained during Q4.

Performance in respect to timeliness of completing Child Looked After Review recommendations was on target (95%) for the second quarter in a row. Q3 saw a single IRO subject to informal performance management to address a backlog of outstanding Minutes that had gone out of timescales due to them being on compassionate leave. Whilst there was a dip in minutes being completed within 20 working days in November 2020 (78%); overall performance for Q3 was 88% up from 83% in Q2. Prior to Covid-19 restrictions; if Child Looked After Reviews could not be held within the child's home; then they would have taken place at school. 93% of children looked after were consulted by their IRO; and 89% participated at their Child Looked After Review which is an improvement on Q2. Work continues to be undertaken with IRO's to improve performance in relation to IRO Oversight's being recorded on the child's record; during Q3 92% of all children looked after had a minimum of 2 oversight's recorded over a 12 month period.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Since June 2020 the majority of the 70 children identified with a plan of long term fostering but not yet matched who were under 17 and a half years of age, have now been matched with their carers.
2. Timeliness of CLA Review minutes and recommendations is improving, with Year to date at end of June increasing from 68% (end of 19/20) to 82% and from 77% (end of 19/20) to 82% respectively.
3. Implementation of Signs of Safety continues to progress with a programme of weekly group supervision for Conference Chairs / IROs scheduled to cover 9 topics; in addition, a 3 day bespoke SofS training programme has been commissioned which will include the opportunity for Team Managers, Senior Practitioners and partner agencies to observe a 'Mock' Signs of Safety Conference in December 2020. The PIRO is offering SofS Child Protection Conference workshops to partner agencies and social work staff to support the model being implemented and embedded during 2020/21 and 21/22.
4. Increased use of formal dispute resolutions: Qtr 1/2/3 = 49; compared with 17 dispute resolutions for the year 2019/20. - These covered Delegated Authority, completion of Care Plans and Pathway Plans for Lac Reviews and the completion of Matching assessments.
5. Distribution of CLA Review minutes is improving since the Convening List was amended to allow IRO's to identify who should receive minutes and where minutes needed to be redacted. IRO's only need to update and save this in the calendar invitation; which alerts Business Support that this has been updated.
6. 93% children have a minimum of 2 IRO Oversight recorded in the previous 12 month period; this indicator will change to a minimum of 4 oversights by the end of 2021/22.
7. Informal and formal Dispute Resolutions - work has been undertaken to create a Dispute Resolution Form on Mosaic, which will enable robust reporting on this area of IRO practice; with the first report being available at the end Q4.
8. SMART Child Protection Plans - development work has been undertaken with CP Chairs attending 9 sessions of group supervision on

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

1. Improving the quality of Looked After Children review minutes written in the form of letters to the child. These need to incorporate recording parental views appropriately and focus on how the style has relevance to the child as well as covering statutorily required areas. There is potential to use the letter to the child at the 1st Lac Review as the beginning of life story work - equally there needs to be a formal account appropriate for consideration in court proceedings. The Principal IRO will address this within individual supervisions with the IROs and undertake quality auditing Q3.
2. Parental participation in CP and Care Planning needs to be further promoted to support parents who have difficulties in contributing through virtual meetings and those parents who have previously found engagement difficult. Use of hybrid meetings - physical meetings for the Chair / IRO, Social Worker, parents and parental support / advocate, with input through video conference from agencies and carers, is being progressed this is dependent upon a dedicated Covid-secure Conference Room being identified. The implementation of Signs of Safety Child Protection Conferences will be adversely impacted in the absence of hybrid meetings; as the current 'virtual meeting' technology doesn't adequately support the recording of the meeting using a whiteboard by the chair; and if a technological solution could be found, many parents would be unable to see what is being written and would resultingly be disadvantaged.
3. 4) SMART Child Protection Plans - it is proposed that in Q1 2021/22 that an collaborative audit be undertaken involving Social Workers and Child Protection Conference Chairs to look at the implementation SofS and the impact of this on outcome focussed plans for children.
4. Child Protection Minutes - the quality of minutes has been reported by Child Protection Conference Chairs as variable; in the first 3 quarters of 2020/21. BS face the challenge of taking notes linked to information gathered during a Child Protection Conference linked to the Signs of Safety Model. As all Child Protection Conferences are held via video conferencing this means that Chairs are unable to 'map' the conversation as in a face to face meeting on a whiteboard. Child Protection Conference Chairs will therefore have to provide additional guidance and support to BS to ensure the record of the meeting is of a good enough standard.

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<p>Signs of Safety and the 5 day Signs of Safety - Safety Planning/Child Protection Planning training.</p> <p>9. Following a Learning Review held during Q2 the PIRO has drafted an Isolation, Seclusion, Restriction and Restraint Policy for use by Social Workers, Team Manager's, the Fostering and Placements Service that is geared to raise awareness and improve practice. The PIRO supported the delivery of training to Social Workers at the Bi-Monthly Learning sessions during Q3. This has been positively received by Fostering Social Workers, Foster Carers and the commissioning service.</p> <p>10. IRO's when chairing the Child's Looked After Review, should explore whether either the Placement Plan or Delegated Authority Forms (which sit alongside the child's Care Plan) should be reviewed and where appropriate amended. In February 2020 a step to evidence the Delegated Authority Form had been completed, signed and uploaded was populated on Mosaic; and whilst 95% of all children looked after have a form on file; not all of these are signed or fit for purpose. During Q3 the PIRO re-circulated the Tri-X Guidance on Delegated Authority to HoS with a request that Team Managers explain the importance of this as a live document that should be amended as the child's circumstances change. (see development 4)</p>	<p>5. Delegated Authority - Following the Tri-X guidance being recirculated to Team Managers and Heads of Service; a working group is currently reviewing the guidance and form currently in use. It is proposed that the Delegated Authority Form be added as a process (in addition to the existing step) on Mosaic and this development work will be undertaken during Q4. As a consequence the quality audit proposed to be undertaken by the PIRO during Q4 will now take place in Q1 2021/22 to determine whether there is a shift from the current 'standardised form' to 'differentiated delegated' linked to the individual child's circumstances and needs.</p> <p>6. A review of the existing Child Looked After Quality Assurance Monitoring Form will be undertaken; in order to evidence a range of performance indicators that are not currently available; for example parental consultation and participation. In addition, there is at present no Quality Assurance Monitoring Form for Child Protection Conferences and these forms and associated reports will be developed during Q4.</p> <p>7. During Q4 work will be undertaken with the IRO's to further promote children and young peoples participation in Child Looked After Reviews; to support them over time to gain the skills to identify what they want to discuss at their meeting; to move from a position of co-chairing or chairing their own meeting as and when they feel ready to do this. This will be linked to 'Hart's Ladder of participation'.</p>
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**Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that Safeguarding and Review has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.**



Rationale for score

Safeguarding and review continue to drive change as identified and are working to provide robust challenge to operational teams; consequently improvement is being seen in key areas of performance in relation to children looked after e.g. timeliness of plans being completed and the challenge in relation to delegated authority is being taken forward in a working group to improve the quality of delegation. Further improvement work is planned to move up the scale.

### **Summary: Child Exploitation (Salwa Farid – Head of Safeguarding and Review)**

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

The service structure in relation to responses to children at risk of Extra-familial harm in Herefordshire has rapidly evolved since 2019.

In January 2019 there was approximately 13 children in Herefordshire recorded as being at risk of CSE. As a direct Response to a Serious Case Review which highlighted a number of recommendations in relation to responses to children experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation the Local Authority undertook a full service review of cases where CSE was identified. One of the recommendations was Hereford Safeguarding Partnership formerly the Hereford Safeguarding Children Board to adopt a contextualised safeguarding approach. In February 2019 a review of all cases across the service identified 62 young people and care leavers as being at potential risk of extra-familial harm and requiring assessment. However, there was no framework in Herefordshire to assess other form of exploitation only CSE. In July 2019 West Mercia Child Criminal Exploitation Needs Assessment was published and the New Child Exploitation tools were launched across the Children and Families Directorate and Safeguarding Partnership.

Making the transition from an approach where CSE is the lone form of exploitation to one which includes the additional areas and all age approach, recognised as Contextual Safeguarding is a significant shift in both culture and strategic response.

This required further development of the Child Exploitation Team within Children's Services an also expansion to existing CSE coordinator role. The CSE coordinator role transitioned to the CE Coordinator (Child Exploitation) and now involved chairing Risk Management Meetings and provide oversight on all Child Exploitation assessments. In addition to this there was a requirement to provide a strong internal and external training offer across the partnership to raise the profile of contextual safeguarding and promote best practice in line with national developments. The CE Coordinator assisted the development and implementation of new frameworks that incorporate the expanded remit of the team.

Further Expansion of team since 2019 has included recruitment of an extra child exploitation worker to meet growing demand and offer direct work and outreach support in relation to CE across the service. A Managing Practitioner and another CE coordinator were appointed in June 2020. The CE team is currently in the process of rebranding to represent their journey towards a Contextualised Safeguarding approach that incorporates Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Peer on Peer abuse, Modern slavery and Youth Violence.

It is envisioned the team will continue to expand to meet the anticipated growing needs of children experiencing extra-familial harm within Herefordshire. The demand of different forms of exploitation varies across the service and we require flexibility and diversity to be able to allocate as appropriate.

One of the core activities of the CE team is to operate alongside the wider partnerships in each service areas, many being key strategic partners including police, health, education, youth justice, probation and voluntary organisations. Effective, coordinated and robust partnership working is one of the teams greatest assets with relationships are well managed at an individual staff level and at strategic partnership group level. One of our core functions is to support police, health, education and strategic partners

in developing their responses to Extra-familial harm. The Child exploitation team take the lead in completing “returning to Home Interview” with children going missing from home, school, or placements.

The team also take the lead in developing tailored Safety Plans with professionals, children, and their families to respond to the risks identified for each child. The team review the Safety Plans on fortnightly, monthly, or two monthly based on the level of risks identified.

The CE team have a crucial role to play in Herefordshire promoting best practice and a culture that ensures all victims of exploitation are recognised and supported across agencies. The team have responsibility to use the Professional Disagreement Process to escalate concerns where the outcomes for young people who have been exploited fall below the standards of best practice.

The Local Authority is represented at a regional and national level. We work closely other local authorities and national organisations at the forefront developing policy, guidance and research. The Managing Practitioner and CE coordinators regularly attend the West Midlands Regional Group training events, and National Working Group Exploitation Co-coordinators forum and through this the West Midlands Migration strategic partnership. The CE team has also represented the Local Authority in Westminster as part of NPIES ( National Parents as partners in Exploitation Safeguarding) aimed at raising the profile of parents and families affected by child exploitation and creating a national platform for discussion on how best to support these families.

We have established strong and robust relationships with other Exploitations Teams across the region and nationally this promotes best practice and joined up work across barriers.

The CE team remain strongly committed to ensuring that Herefordshire’s responses to CE are dynamic and in-line with ever changing responses to the changing landscape of exploitation.

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

Due to the rapid expansion of the CE team comparisons of key performance indicators from previous years are non-comparative. Collecting performance data in relation to the activities undertaken by the Team remain in their infancy and there is ongoing amendments required in order to accurately capture the key activities and measurable outcomes.

Return Home Interviews (RHI’s) completed within 72 hours of return – Our performance target is currently set at 90%. Historically it has been noted that the data for completing RHI’s often fails to be met. This has been impacted by a number of factors including timescales and responsibility of Social workers across the service to undertake RHI’s of Herefordshire children placed in other area. This would impact on the data of the CE team although not represent the performance of that team. December 2020, Herefordshire no longer undertake RHI for children placed in Hereford by other LA’s therefore increasing capacity for the CE Team to undertake RHI’s for Herefordshire children placed in other areas. This ensures equity of service for all Herefordshire children regardless of geographical location. These changes will enable us to reach our performance target.



Exploitation Risk Assessments completed within 15 working days – This performance target was altered in December 2020, increasing the timeframe to complete CE assessments from 5 days to 15. This aligns us with the national consensus however the CE team are not responsible for the completion of assessments and this lies with the allocated social worker for each case. The performance indicator target is 90%, we are currently only completing 40% of our CE assessment in this period. Further review is required to consider if the performance indicator would be more appropriately applied to the individual teams responsible for undertaking the assessment so they are more directly responsible for ensuring compliance with the performance targets.

First Risk Management Meetings held within 15 working days of CE Assessment outcome (from September 2020, 10 working days until Aug 2020) – Similar to the assessments this is a performance measure that the CE Team cannot influence. Broadly speaking we are failing to meet the target of 95%. Further consideration required as to whether this performance measure would be more appropriately measured in relation to individual teams performance. This will allow Team Managers with responsibility for each case greater influence and oversight of the timeliness of convening Risk Management Meetings.

'Actual' and 'Significant Risk' CE Risk cases to have RMMs every 20 working days- Historically meeting the performance target of 95% has not been possible due to a number of barriers. In December 2020 the MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel) launched. One of the main functions and purpose of the Panel approach was to ensure timeliness of risk management meetings through planned and predictable structure. The timeliness of Risk Management meetings has been historically impacted by availability of key partner agencies such as police. It is anticipated once the panel system has embedded and meetings have been convened we will be performing to the target set. There is already an upward trend evidenced in December's performance data. We are broadly achieving the target set for reviewing children at moderate risk and this will continue to be sustainable through the MACE panel arrangements

'Moderate' CE Risk cases to have RMMs every 12 weeks - The Data performance target for this measure is set at 95% we are currently achieving 100% . This is due to the time between meetings and the predictable and planned manner of review risk management meetings. This will continue to under the recently implemented MACE panel as described in point 4.

Safety plans distributed within 48 hours of RMM –Current performance targets are under review as the data provided by MOSAIC was not accurate. All children and families subject to Risk Management Plans are provided with a safety plan at each meeting. This is then uploaded to documents on MOSAIC and also captured within the Safety Plan step on MOSAIC. Currently the MOSAIC Safety plan step is embedded within the meeting minutes which does not allow for timely distribution. All meeting minutes are signed off once received and the plan included, however timeliness this and distribution is often inconsistent from Business Support which would make meeting out target to 95% unachievable. Moving forward the Safety Plan step will need to be a separate standalone document that can be completed and distributed in 72hrs. Only then are we able to capture and reflect the true timescale for children and families receiving their safety plans.

In order to meaningfully capture the core activities of the CE team the performance indicators need to incorporate the following factors such as oversight from CE coordinators and monthly case supervision of FSW undertaking on cases where extra-familial harm is identified. The reduction and fluctuation of risk and the effectiveness of Safety plans to be captured in re-referral rate to MACE panel. In order to fully transition towards a Contextual safeguarding model outcome measures will need to not only focus on the individual case but also the effectiveness of assessments and interventions to mitigate harm and reduce risk in identified peer groups or contexts.



As registered Social Workers with Social Worker England the Managing Practitioner and CE coordinators have a professional responsibility to children and families to provide a good standard of service and are also accountable to the people of Herefordshire to realise the directorate level visions set out within the County Plan and agreed by the elected members.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The team is made of 100% permanent expert workers
2. Team members are able to provide specialist advice and support to children social workers as well as our partners from health, police and education around children exploitation
3. The team members are meeting their target where they are able to influence the outcome
4. The team take the lead in developing tailored and effective Safety Plans with professionals, children, and their families to respond to the risks identified for each child. The team review the Safety Plans on fortnightly, monthly, or two monthly based on the level of risks identified
5. The team work collaboratively with internal and external partners to effectively safeguard children from exploitation
6. The team actively work with the local police, schools, and health professionals to share information and develop disruptive strategies to safeguard children
7. The team take the lead on delivering specialist “Child Exploitation” training to staff members, and the feedback received is always very positive and reflects the standard of skills and knowledge the team members hold
8. Verbal feedback received from children and families is also positive. Team members are appreciated for making themselves available, providing support, and advice in a timely manner, and effectively engaging children and their families in the discussions and decision making.

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

1. Introduce a revised scorecard for the service to accurately captured the service’s performance indicator- March 2021
2. Introduce a recognised intervention framework for direct work with children and families- April 2021
3. Review the team structure to ensure that the team has the capacity to respond effectively to the current and future demand- April 2021
4. Identify appropriate assessment, and intervention frameworks to assist the team for their journey towards a Contextualised Safeguarding approach that incorporates Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Peer on Peer abuse, Modern slavery and Youth Violence- June 2021
5. Develop the team’s skills and expertise to respond effectively to the Contextualised Safeguarding approach- throughout 2021
6. Although rich in experience and heritage it has been noted that the team comprises of only white, females. Given the scope and nature of interventions undertaken it would be beneficial to consider how our workforce reflects and meets the needs of the young people we support
7. Develop feedback system to include professionals, children and families to inform our practice and the future team development plan

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



Rationale for score

The CE team remains in its infancy, and as the remit of the team expands to cover all forms of Contextual Safeguarding, naturally the structure and capacity of the team will need to increase to meet the growing demands of the service. The assessment and intervention framework for contextual safeguarding will continue to be developed.

**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)**

Strengths-based practice is starting to have an impact on improving outcomes for children subject to child in need and child protection planning, as well as children subject to PLO and court proceedings. More children who are subject to care proceedings are achieving permanence plans outside of care, including through reunification, SGO and adoption. More work is needed however to achieve SGO at the end of proceedings. Safety planning is more evident in practice and risk is being more confidently 'held' and proactive, collaboratively reduced.

The quality and frequency of case supervision have improved over time but this is not consistently recorded in a timely way. More case supervision records evidence plan progression to improve children's outcomes, through setting and reviewing decisions and actions. Personal supervision data is not consistently recorded which impacts on the performance data and does not reflect the reality of the work being undertaken. Permanent worker ratios have improved significantly due to the recruitment of NQSWs.

Whilst the overall number of cases in the service has increased, most social workers have manageable caseloads relative to their experience and the nature of work being undertaken. The extension of some agency workers over-establishment has helped significantly. Managers however are responsible for more cases than they should be, particularly given the nature of PLO and court work, and the significant inexperience of the workforce.

Most children are seen within timescales however careless or delayed recording continues to impact on performance. Graded Care Profile is more consistently used to inform ongoing assessment in neglect cases, however practice still feels led by the performance data rather than social workers and managers recognising where GCP would be helpful in any case. Most children have an up to date delegated authority. Most children have an up to date case summary however the performance in one team is impacting on the performance overall. Cases in PLO are more at risk of drift due to challenges in undertaking some elements of assessment and support, however a robust mechanism for review and HoS oversight remains in place. Performance in duration of care proceedings remains very good, despite the Covid pandemic. CP and CIN plans do not drift.

Challenges in the timely approval of core group records is impacting significantly on performance data which does not reflect the frequency of meetings taking place. Poor practice in relation to child in need plans following child protection plans has been reversed. Most children have a child in need plan developed within 6 weeks of a child protection plan ending and most children have their child in need plan reviewed within timescales, however challenges in the timely approval of child in need review records is impacting on performance data. Inconsistent practice in the timely completion of strategy meetings has been addressed is not consistently good, however the timeliness of s47 investigations and child and family assessments remains inconsistent.

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

Permanence - av. weeks in proceedings 25.20. 28% kinship placements during proceedings achieve SGO at IRH/final hearing. 54% children achieve a plan of permanence outside of care. 5 fostering for adoption YTD.

Case supervision - 88%, impacted by team 2 performance (58%).

Workforce - personal supervision 75% (due to managers missing the deadline for data recording in December). Overall cases 273 (steadily increasing since April 20). No social workers with more than 20 cases. 2 social workers with more than 16 cases. 100% posts filled. 77% posts have a permanent social worker.

Visits - CP and looked after visits 94%. CIN visits 81% (performance impacted by team 2 76%). GCP 74% and the remaining 26% are in progress. Delegated authority 93%.

Case summaries 86% (impacted by team 2 performance 72%). Strategy discussions 100%. Section 47s and C&Fs 67%. PLO within 16 weeks 100%, PLO within 12 weeks 69%.

CIN plan following a CP plan 98%. CIN review within 6 weeks of CP plan ending 86%. CIN reviews held within timescales 79%. Average duration of CIN plans 2.4 months. CIN

plans +6 months 13%. Core groups within timescales 40% (data does not reflect practice - there are currently circa 70 core group records in the system to be edited / approved / distributed). CP plans +9 months 10%. All bar one case is or has been in PLO, or had HoS oversight. CP plan +2 years 1 x sibling group of 3 children (in care proceedings).

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Positive learning culture, evidenced by regular learning and sharing best practice focus at service meetings; weekly Shout Outs celebrating good practice. Impact evident in the findings of Essex re-visit.
2. Strengthening practice in achieving permanence for children outside of care.
3. Stability of workforce including increasing rates of permanent workforce.
4. Training opportunities regularly taken up by staff - SofS, bi-monthly learning events, ACE training (CPRs and FFA); FSWs receiving Solihull training, domestic abuse / perpetrator abuse / PAMS.
5. Improved quality of practice and timeliness in PLO has increased the proportion of cases where PLO is concluded within 12-16 weeks
6. Generally the culture and practice are shifting towards focussing more on improving outcomes for children and families and becoming less process-driven.

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

1. Embedding use of Genopro and the Family Network Assessment Record.
2. Further develop shared reporting via Mosaic and / or trackers for cases in PLO and care proceedings.
3. Timeliness of s47s and C&F assessments.
4. SW Academy offer for team managers to develop skills in reflective supervision.
5. Review of permanence plans for kinship care with a view to SGO.
6. Proposal to recruit one additional CP Court team manager due to: number of cases each manager is responsible for, the nature of the work to be supported and overseen re pre-birth assessments, PLO, court work and adoption, coupled with the significant inexperience of the workforce.
7. Address performance in team 2.

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



Rationale for score

The score evidences some progression and reflects feedback from Essex. CP Court it is now implementing Signs of Safety and embedding strengths based practice this should see an improvement in quality of assessment and analysis and improve outcomes for children.

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

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

The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 3 there were 329 children in care which equates to 91 per 10,000, which is significantly higher than the national average (65 per 10,000) and that of statistical neighbours (54 per 10,000). The number of looked after children has been fairly stable over recent months but has reduced slightly during the quarter.

Care orders have been discharged for 15 children in the C&YP in care teams in this quarter - 7 children was reunified and 8 children became subject to SGO's. At the end of quarter 3 - 19 applications were filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the care system. There were 8 SGO applications and 3 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are a further 5 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications filed with legal services. 9 children have been formally long-term matched.

Essex carried out a diagnostic in August which identified many strengths including quality of leadership, assessments, focus on reunification, compliance and confidence and commitment of practitioners. They identified areas for improvement as life story work, direct work, staff turnover, permanency planning, placement stability and joint working with the fostering/placement services. The team have focussed upon improving the quality of life story work and this is due to be re-audited in February 2021 to review progress.

A review of those children with a care plan of long-term fostering who are not yet long-term matched was completed to consider whether reunification could be achieved and actions identified as well as learning which will be shared across the service in Q4. There has continued to be some staff turnover and consequently caseloads are higher than I would want and children have had the instability of a change in social worker. Two children moved from residential to an in house HIPSS placement but sadly more children moved into residential care because a suitable foster placement could not be found.

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

Audit completed on the theme of parental participation in November. Of the 4 cases audited 1 was assessed as good, 1 as requires improvement and 1 as inadequate. Although some aspects of practice have improved in this area practice is still not consistent enough.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Audit and Essex continued to find good evidence of management oversight and footprint;
2. Compliance with statutory timescales has continued to be good;
3. Good progress in reducing numbers of children in care with further applications progressing
4. Good progress with ensuring timely assessment of long-term matching

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

1. Continue work to reduce numbers of children in care
2. Increase number of children having direct family time with both parents;
3. Ensure all children in care have an up to date case summary;
4. Improve confidence of practitioners in completing direct work with children;
5. Improve stability of team and reduce caseloads

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.



Rationale for score

Score of 7 based on sustaining compliance with regulations and good progress with applications for discharge/SGO, long-term matching, elimination of backlog of life story books and later life letters and evidence from Essex that change in culture and practice in working in partnership with parents evidenced.

**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)**

Continued staff instability and turnover although one NQSW has joined the team and so there are two permanent Social Workers being employed at the end of the quarter. The Managing Practitioner left in October and new postholder started in November but there was a gap due to annual leave. The current team manager is due to go on maternity leave in March and an interim manager has been appointed. Agency workers have been in post during the quarter and so performance in the team has gradually improved during the quarter in relation to supervision, completion of case summaries and pathway plans with further improvement required

. Timeliness of visits within timescales has improved with the exception of CIN visits. This relates to delay in closing cases which could be easily avoided. The report to support management pathway plans will be amended and available from 25th January when SofS workflow is launched. This includes an amended Pathway plan.

Together with the appointment of Senior Practitioners to complete Pathway plan reviews it is anticipated that both timeliness and quality of pathway plans will improve during Q4 and Q1 of 2021/22.

Outcomes for care leavers are excellent and have been sustained despite the Covid pandemic. However we are ambitious to further increase the number of our care leavers who in education, training and employment particularly as the impact of Covid continues over the coming months. Audit programme has shown some improvement in quality of practice with no inadequate audits during this quarter although further improvement is required to have cases assessed as "good" or "outstanding". The Widemarsh Street accommodation has remained full and planning is progressing for the opening of Bath Street accommodation which is due to open on 1st March following a delay of 4 weeks due to Covid delaying building work. Applications for the discharge of care order following successful reunification have progressed during Q3 with one discharged and one expected to be discharged in January. Plans are also in place to support 2 young people to return home from residential care.

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

In October an audit of 16+ cases was completed on the theme of pathway plans. 5 cases were audited with 1 assessed as "good" and 4 assessed as "requires improvement". Compliments from young people "Hey I don't really know how to tell you but I would like to say a massive thank you to all your team for supporting me and never giving up. I know that I have been a pain with all my running episodes I have done. I am very grateful for all you help and support. I would like to give a first shout out to Fran for never giving up on me and getting here to this point because if I didn't have here I wouldn't of made it without her. Then you got Steph, Andrea and Stacie for just giving me so much advice even though sometimes I didn't take it but you have all been amazing..."

"Whilst in care I got taught a lot of life skills, got involved in participation with a lovely lady and we do all sorts of activities! We go and speak in big groups of people, give our voice etc. When we are ready to move out they help us with how to sort bills out, and help us buy things. They help us whilst learning to drive by paying some of those lessons for us. They're always at the end of the phone, I'd be dead without the help of my PA, and my former social worker. They do an amazing job, people just don't see that side of it. To all social workers/PA's etc out there as someone who's been in care I'm proud to say you've been the ones to make me who I am today! 😊"

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Team are in touch with more care leavers than statistical neighbours;
2. More care leavers are in suitable accommodation than statistical neighbours;
3. Number of care leavers in education, training and employment is higher than statistical neighbours;
4. Audits show that the quality of practice is improving; S47's are being completed to timescale; case summaries and delegated authority has improved;
5. new accommodation for care leavers with complex needs opened in July and is now full with some young people enabled to step

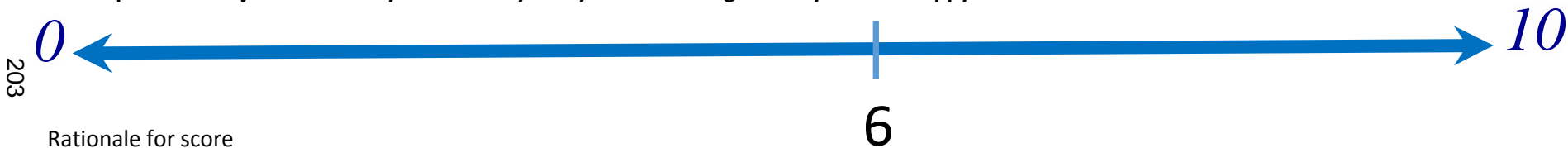
**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Statutory visits for those on CIN plans need to be completed to timescale and cases closed promptly;
2. case supervision needs to be completed on all cases at least every 3 months;
3. pathway plans need to be completed and reviewed within timescales; quality of pathway plans needs to further improve; chronologies need to be up to date; case summaries need to be updated at least every 3 months;
4. using Signs of Safety approach with young people to help them engage in their wellbeing/safety goals via their pathway plan and reduce risky behaviours;

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<p>down from residential and to return from out of area; more young people are "staying put" providing stability for young people;</p> <p>6. two Social Work apprentices appointed from existing personal advisors who are keen to work in the 16+ team when they qualify. One new NQSW joined the team, new managing practitioner has joined the team and recruitment of Senior Practitioners who will review pathway plans is underway.</p>	<p>5. improve approach to building stronger support networks around young people by improving staff's confidence to hold family network meetings and devising support plans for care experienced young people;</p> <p>6. offering workshops in relation to tenancy management, budgeting, emotional wellbeing in conjunction with partner agencies such as housing solutions, strong young minds, children's finance and preparing for independence;</p> <p>7. reduce the number of young people at risk of exploitation and provide accommodation options that enable young people to live within their local community.</p>
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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being care leaver practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



Rationale for score

Score of 6 as outcomes for care leavers have been sustained however compliance with statutory timescales for visits and review of Pathway plans are not yet being sustained and workforce remains unstable.

**Summary: Fostering 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)**

There has been a decrease in the number of applications received during Quarter 3. Marketing officer post has been vacant since 1st April 2020 and although alternative plans are being progressed this is impacting on ability of the team to recruit this year. Recruitment officer is working to cover marketing role in addition to her own responsibilities.

The number of newly approved kinship placements is on track to exceed this year's target. There has been a further increase in the number of children being placed in residential care. Two children did move from residential to HIPSS placements during Q3 however no other potential HIPSS placements have been identified to progress during Q4 yet. Placement stability for children in care has worsened and although those who have had 3+ placements in the last 12 months is better than statistical



neighbours the number of children in the same placement for more than 2.5 years has reduced quite significantly. This is partly due to some children in stable placements becoming subject to SGO however there have been other unplanned endings and placement disruptions for children who had been in their placements for a long time.

Covid is likely to have impacted upon the resilience of foster carers but it is unclear to what extent this is a factor. The delay in long-term matching decisions has been addressed and the timely completion of long-term matching assessments and decisions is starting to become embedded practice and is monitored by Case Progression Officers. Essex completed a review of Looked after Children's teams in August and identified areas to improve very relevant to the fostering service including placement stability and level of challenge by Fostering SW's. Funding has been agreed to appoint a Fostering IRO who will complete all foster carer reviews increasing the independent scrutiny of the service, challenge and releasing capacity of Fostering managers to focus on service development and improvement.

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

There is a need for fostering to be included within the audit programme and this is planned to commence from April 2021.

Feedback from applicants attending Fostering panel is very positive about the assessment process

Themes from foster carers reviews include:

- generally positive relationships with supervising social workers
- concern about number of changes in social workers – for foster carers and children
- appreciating the learning, advice and support provided by the HIPSS service

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Number of kinship foster carers approved is likely to exceed target in 2020/21;
2. 8 children in long-term care left care via an SGO during Q3; 2 children moved from residential to an in house HIPSS placement during Q3;
3. changes to procedures for DBS and medicals will reduce bureaucracy for foster carers and fostering team;
4. increased foster carer allowances and 100% discount in council tax were agreed by Cabinet which will support recruitment and retention of foster carers.

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

1. Need to increase applications for general, HIPSS, sleepover scheme and supported lodgings providers; improve retention rates; decrease number of children and young people placed in residential care because no suitable foster placement is available; improve placement stability for children and young people in care;
2. improve % of foster carers with an up to date DBS, who have completed TSD standards, have received supervision and annual review within timescales; ensure all staff receive monthly supervision and reduce caseloads of supervising social workers.

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





## Rationale for score

Good progress has been made in assessing and approving kinship carers for children in care; in progressing care plans for SGO's to enable children to exit the care system and in long-term matches. There remain insufficient foster carers to meet needs of our children in care with an increase in residential placements and a reduction in placement stability.

### **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. Two internal focussed audits on 'the child's voice' identified the majority of cases audited as 'good'.

The Ofsted focussed visit (Dec 2019) confirmed that CIN plans are tailored and responsive to children's needs. It also confirmed '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 team is continuing to gain 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 practice from IROs, the legal team and education staff. Two social workers have recently received praise from the Court.

The CWD Team is carrying one vacancy. The number of cases held by the team has increased recently and consequently the caseloads of individual workers has risen above the average at the present time. This increase is in part as a result of a backlog of assessment cases during the initial lockdown. A further factor bringing pressure on the team is the increasing number of cases requiring Court of Protection work in relation to Deprivation of Liberty. This has resulted in uneven performance against KPIs. Action has been taken to reduce individual caseloads and a limited restructure in the service has taken place aimed at increasing management capacity to prevent management oversight and sign off being a 'bottleneck' that causes additional delays. A mini-action plan to provide more systematic approach to support individual workers in relation to ensuring that timescales are adhered to is being implemented.

The CWD Team is now working through all cases with the legal team to systematically identify any deprivations of liberty. The team is now building up experience in mental capacity assessment and best interests' assessment. Detailed new procedures have been drafted to ensure that the preparation for adulthood is as smooth as possible.

The range of options for short breaks in Herefordshire is quite limited. This is despite the considerable efforts of the Council's Children's Commissioning Team and the creativity of individual social workers who continue to explore all options for increasing choice for families. A project to recruit overnight short break foster carers had good initial success but the momentum needs to be rebuilt through marketing as turnover of carers leaves a need for further recruitment. Other day-time options using foster carers are also being explored. Service closures as a result of COVID have further reduced the breadth of the offer and some families, who are struggling as a result of lockdown are being assessed as requiring additional support, hence compounding the issue. Families are being contacted more regularly than usual to ensure that circumstances do not deteriorate. Additional risk assessments are being conducted with the most 'at risk' families.

The ILACS inspection report also commented on strong and effective work with partner agencies (which) results in effective support to children and their families. The referral route into the team for non-safeguarding referrals will change as the multi-agency Single Point of Referral team meetings (SPORT) are being ceased. This provides an opportunity to remove one aspect of delay in the process of families being assessed for a service. The Head of Service is working with the lead community paediatrician to ensure that strong links are maintained. Working relationships are strong with the transition team in adult well-being and the revised transition protocol describes expectations for cases transferring. Excellent working relationships have developed since then with the child development centre, partly as the result of the additional demands of appropriate information sharing required to address COVID. Agreed patterns of working with local special schools are currently being strengthened with regular meetings being planned to improve communication between the CWD team and the schools. Schools have contributed to the redesign of the referral process.

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'.

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

Weekly, monthly and quarterly 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. All of the team's internal audits have averaged 'good'. Two

internal audits on the 'Voice of the Child' showed that to be a strength of the team. An audit on management oversight showed supervision to be a strength but identified the need for oversight to be more evident in case files. An audit of Pathway Planning also received an overall judgement of 'good'. 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 the children's and corporate complaints process 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.

Feedback from partner agencies regarding communication and quality of practice.

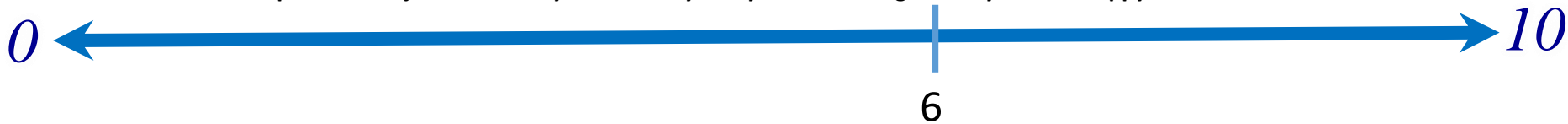
**Areas of strength, evidence**

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. Positive feedback from a wide variety sources in relation to team practice indicates this is a strength.
2. The use of short breaks and direct payments has developed with increasing numbers of families being supported. 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.
5. Greatly improved working relationships with health providers and the clinical commissioning group.
6. Audit evidence of good practice in relation to the voice of the child and positive feedback families in relation to the support received.

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

1. Developing much greater consistency and focus around performance measures, e.g. visits and Child and Family Assessments within timescales. A mini-plan to be developed to build a team performance culture and a systematic pattern of support for team members. March 21
2. Review of management structure and supervisory roles and responsibilities within the CWD Team. Now in place and being embedded Jan/Feb 21.
3. Contribute to a review of short breaks and direct payments to maximize the choice for families – March 21
4. Build experience of mental Capacity assessments, DOLs applications and best interest decisions for all social workers in the team to ensure that 16-18 year olds are accorded their full legal rights. July 21
5. Review and develop detailed procedures including to ensure that the team meets its responsibilities as outlined in the updated Preparing for Adulthood Protocol to facilitate successful transitions to adulthood. March 21
6. Continue to progress current work being undertaken on the area of continuing care assessments and joint health and social care funding of packages and; to address the issue of delegated (Health) tasks within the provision of short breaks packages to ensure appropriate clinical oversight. Mar 21

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.



Rationale for score

Some ongoing issues with not getting activity to time – Visit for CIN and Child and Family assessments not within timescale

**Summary: Social Work Academy (Joe Davenport – Principal Social Worker)**

**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)**

My journey into the role of interim principal social worker (PSW) and head of the academy came rather unexpectedly as I originally came to Herefordshire as the Signs of Safety practice lead. However, from previous experience helping other local authorities (LAs) implement Signs of Safety practice, I knew the critical role the academy plays in supporting the learning and development required of the workforce to help understand and work through this strengths and relationship based model. The previous PSW had been off on long term sick since earlier in the year and I inherited a team of advanced practitioners who were almost all new into post and had no clear direction for several months. There was lots to do, but I worked hard with the team to bring together an improvement plan to give us direction of what structures we needed, support we could offer, and improvements to how we deliver support to students, apprentices, newly qualified social workers (NQSWs), practitioners, and managers across children’s social care.

Seven months later I can report that the team is working so well together and have bonded and stepped up to the plate to see our improvement journey come alive! During this time we have helped support the workforce training on two and five day Signs of Safety, helped deliver targeted training and support to address practice challenges in the assessment, child protection and court, and 16 plus service teams, reverted back to a cohort model for the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) programme for NQSWs, helped organize and facilitate the Signs of Safety (SofS) launch event in November 2020, the first black history month celebration in Herefordshire, and our virtual Christmas gathering. From the SofS launch we further helped develop our values and vision statement and are busy working on our practice standards in consultation with all service areas to bring clarity and a framework for how we envision and will deliver our support to children and families.

Our quality assurance managers in the academy have also made improvements on more clear quality assurance reports and completely revising our quality assurance framework to align to SofS practice. This includes such innovations as collaborative case audits that are done alongside practitioners rather than separate. This fosters a more dynamic learning situation to help workers learn the importance of reflecting their good work with children and families using clear language that children and young people could understand and shows we care. The new framework also includes a twice yearly practice week whereby various audit, appreciative enquiries

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(celebrates good outcomes for children), practice observations, listening to what children and families say about us, and involving our multi-agency partners. This includes everyone from our support and social workers up to our director and chief executive. It is a live and dynamic way of getting a sense of how well we deliver our support and what difference it makes to the children and young people we support and care for.

We have lots more to do and a clear direction of travel for the year ahead. This includes the academy being able to deliver the two day Signs of Safety training (avoiding costs of the external provider), delivering bespoke SofS training on various practice elements (such as using scaling questions, how to write danger/worry statements, how to make a safety/well-being goals), developing training programmes for assessment skills, court skills, and domestic abuse to name a few. We will also be welcoming a further six NQSWs into the ASYE programme, helping support apprentices and students throughout the workforce, and organising a celebration week for World Social Work Day in March 2021. We also launch our quality assurance framework in March with collaborative case audits and further planning for our first practice week in June 2021. Our quality assurance managers will also be working on revising 10 key internal policies to make the language clear and align them to Signs of Safety practice. The intention is to target key policies that will have maximum impact in the system to align practice to SofS. Finally I will continue work with a task and finish group of the safeguarding partnership working with our agency partners on what training and support they need to help work with us through supporting children and families through Signs of Safety.

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

- We had approximately 250 people attend the Signs of Safety launch event with very positive feedback
- We had approximately 80 people attend the Black History Month celebration event with very positive feedback
- We had approximately 70 people attend our Christmas Celebration event with very positive feedback
- We currently have 18 NQSWs with a further six joining us in April 2021. We have gone to a cohort model so NQSWs are able to support one another and develop collegial relationships to help support their learning and help entice them to stay in Herefordshire. Feedback from NQSWs is they feel very supported through our revised ASYE programme, especially during the challenges of Covid 19
- Completion of the new QA framework, values and vision statement, and SofS practice standards due to be approved in February and March 2021
- Delivery of targeted support to the assessment, CP court, and 16 plus service areas with positive feedback given. Support will continue.
- Advanced practitioners in the academy have attended two and five day SofS training and will begin delivering two day training mentored by a licensed SofS consultant in order to deliver this training in house for new starters
- PSW has coordinated the safeguarding partnership SofS task and finish group to develop a training and support offer for partner agencies to work with us through Signs of Safety. This work will continue
- Academy helped develop and deliver the SofS child, young people, parents, carers, family, and friends survey which asked for qualitative feedback on various areas of service support. A total of 75 responses were received which 70% overall rated the difference we made to a child's life experience as strongly agree or agree. One of many comments from a young person was, *"No they listen, they engage us in activities they supported us with bringing food from the food bank when mum was waiting for her benefits to be sorted"*
- The PSW and advanced practitioners in the academy have been pivotal in supporting our Signs of Safety implementation, including strategic support, learning and training, helping to shape the delivery plan, and leading on the SofS practice champions group representing all service areas

- The PSW attends the strategic board meetings of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership (WMTP) with advanced practitioners attending the sub groups. This helps us link in with what other LAs in the area are doing with their learning and development offers, how we can work with universities to expand our continuous professional development (CPD) offer and explore ways of increasing flexibility to allow more students into the workforce, advocate with the department for education for additional resource and help align our CPD to any government changes, working with Social Work England around professional expectations for CPD, and pooling resources to offer shared training across the partnership.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The academy has come together as a strong, cohesive team providing learning and 1-1 support to practitioners and managers across children’s social care
2. The academy has delivered or co-facilitated many training sessions this year, including induction and training to NQSWs, students, assessment, court skills, and SofS.
3. The academy is well positioned to begin delivering the two day Signs of Safety training to the workforce beginning February.
4. The revised quality assurance framework aligned to Signs of Safety is near completion. This will revitalize the way we quality assure practice and how well we support children and families.
5. The advanced practitioners in the academy currently support 18 NQSWs and a further five students. By April 2021 they will be supporting up to 24 NQSWs and a further two students or apprentices.
6. The academy has helped support 10 student apprentices starting in February 2021 from the Open University. They will do 70 and 100 day placements supported by practice educators across children’s and adult’s social care.
7. Places are about to be offered to the workforce on Practice Educator One (PE1) and leadership programmes offered by the University of Worcestershire. This will help improve the skills and opportunities to managers and those who aspire to be, as well as increase our capacity to support more student social work placements without paying for external PEs.

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

1. Further links with adult social care to help support the ongoing need in both directorates for a stable, highly skilled, and permanent workforce of qualified social workers through student and apprentice placements. (Ongoing)
2. Further development underway on delivery of two day Signs of Safety training plus bespoke smaller sessions on areas of SofS practice (Feb 2021)
3. Agree and rollout to staff new SofS values and vision statements and our practice standards that will detail how we will deliver that vision through our day to day practice and support to children and families (Feb and March 2021)
4. Complete review of key policies, procedures and guidance to support our single practice framework including case transfer and reflective supervision (April 2021)
5. Facilitate action learning programme on reflective supervision for frontline managers (Feb-March 2021)
6. Development of a yearly learning offer of additional training underway in areas of assessment skills, court skills, domestic abuse, difficult discussions and meetings, solution focused practice, life story work, deprivation of liberty assessments, cultural awareness and anti-discrimination, and language that cares. (March 2021)
7. Further improvements being developed in the ASYE programme, including exploring protected caseloads and learning time, 12 month learning offer delivered through a cohort model, and linked to career progression. (April 2021)
8. Cohort 2 of NQSWs start in April 2021 (up to 6 expected).
9. The academy is working with the recruitment and retention summit group to develop a career progression pathway for all practitioners up to team manager level (April 2021).

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<p>8. The academy is currently supporting 18 newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) with a further six anticipated in April. The quality of this support is important to helping increase the knowledge and skills of new social workers while enticing them to remain and contribute to workforce permanence, reducing our numbers and costs of agency social workers.</p>	<p>10. Further work is being undertaken in the WMTP with universities and Social Work England on reducing restrictions on contrasting social work student placements to increase our ability to support more within children’s services (ongoing).</p> <p>11. Regular meetings will continue to take place between children’s and adult’s services academy leads on improving the ability of adult’s to accept more contrasting student and apprentice placements to contribute to workforce retention and stability (ongoing).</p> <p>12. The academy will roll out a new training evaluation process to help gauge how successful the learning offer is received, the value and contributions it makes to continuous professional development (CPD) and identify areas to improve or develop new learning offers (Feb 2021).</p> <p>13. The quality assurance manager will lead on the implementation of the new QA framework with support to managers and practitioners on completing collaborative audits, appreciative enquiries, and learning reviews, as well as six monthly surveys of children, families, friends, and partner agencies (Feb 2021).</p> <p>14. The academy will also be developing a child, family, and professional feedback form to be used at regular intervals during service delivery (ie: at the start of service, mid-way reviews, and when we end our support) to help gauge what difference we have made in the life of a child or young person through our support. (April 2021)</p>
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**Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being children with disabilities practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.**



Rationale for this score

The social care academy team has really stepped up to the plate and come together around our improvement plan. This has enabled us to implement changes in how we delivery our ASYE programme, increased the learning offer, supported our Signs of Safety implementation, support students and apprentices, and helped to skill up our entire children’s service workforce. The quality assurance managers have greatly improved on performance reporting, delivered our new quality assurance framework aligned to Signs of Safety, and has supported the development of our professional practice standards also aligned to Signs of Safety. We are still early in our journey and by this time next year I anticipate I will confidently be able to rate our success at a nine, barring any unforeseen challenges or significant difficulties that may impede this.



**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 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 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.
- 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	Areas for development, intended impact, timescales
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> <li>2. Reporting and outcomes is online with a number of West Midlands colleagues (know this by attendance at West Midlands regional forums)</li> <li>3. Skilled, stable team (no turnover, proficient SQL programming)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Redesign performance reports incorporating the Signs of Safety Forms (January 2021). Progress: The key reports have been updated to included SoS forms. ILACs, visits, weekly and monthly reports. Work is ongoing to ensure the remainder of the reports reflect the SoS forms. Deadline: End March 2021.</li> <li>2. Develop team and team culture from reactive to proactive. Identify areas of reporting that could be developed to support the service (timescale: April 2021), create a system for reporting requests that encourages dialogue and collaborative planning of reporting</li> <li>3. 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. (January 2021) Progress: Some reports have the corporate colour scheme and style. Work ongoing to develop all reports after March 2021 when we have embedded the new SoS forms into reporting.</li> <li>4. 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). (January 2021) Progress: This will now be developed after March 2021.</li> <li>5. Create a 'Performance Team Improvement Plan' to structure the progress and goals of the team in a way that has rigor, challenge and evidence of progress.</li> </ol>

**What do you know about the quality and impact of your work on social work practice in Herefordshire? – Where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that the quality and impact of our work 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.**



Rationale for score

We provide robust reporting that supports the vast majority of social work practice in Herefordshire. To make our score 8/10 our reporting will be improved over the next 6 months to be more efficient and user friendly to the social work teams. This will include reducing the number of reports that get released and making many reports self-service/on demand. To achieve a 9/10, we will look to create reports that, in addition to activity based reporting, provide more insight to what is happening in social care in.



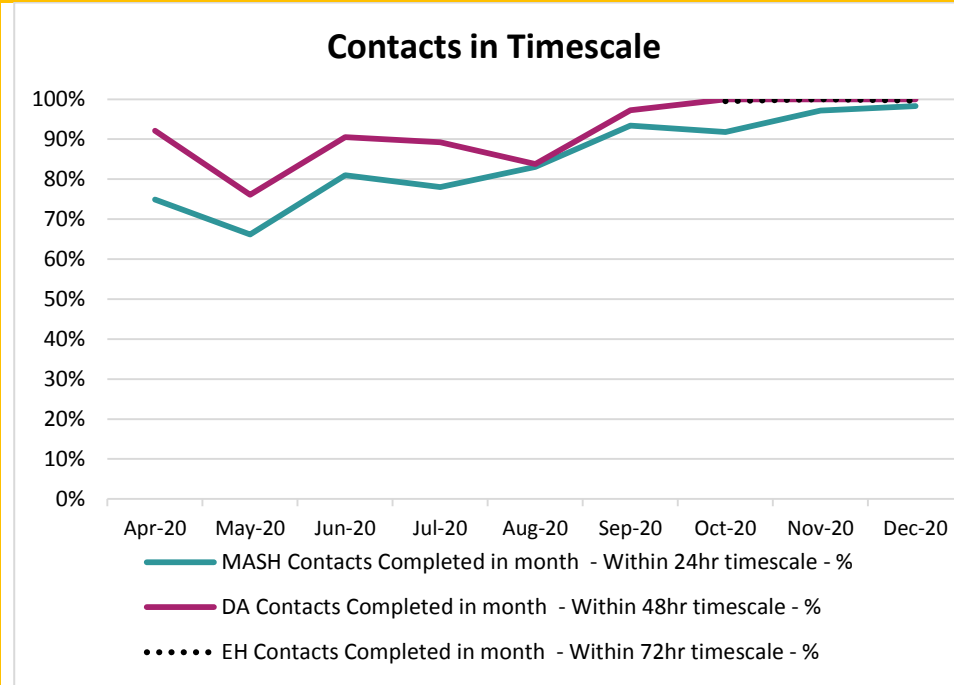
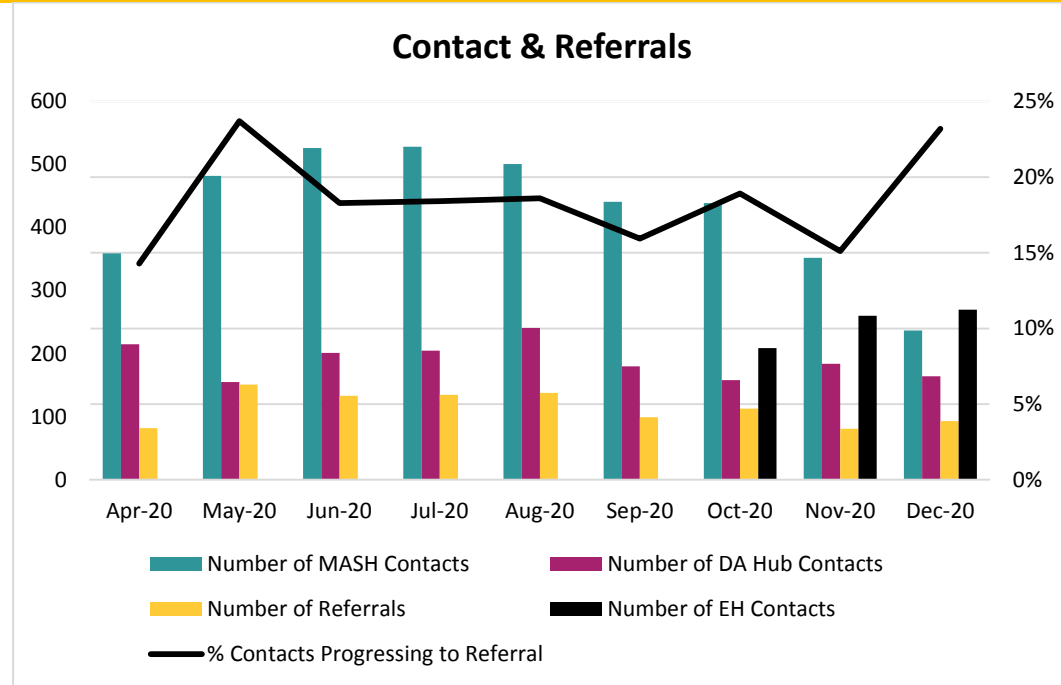


# Safeguarding and Family Support Scorecard December 2020

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<p>What is going well?</p>	<p>What are we worried about?</p>	<p>What are our top priority actions (no more than 5) for the month following the review of performance? Including doing more of what is making a difference for children and families.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 98% of contacts into MASH, 100% of contacts into the DA Hub and 99.6% of contacts into the Early Help Hub were managed in timescales.</li> <li>2. ICPCs in timescale was 92% in December. Year to date figure is 89%; which is better than our comparator authorities.</li> <li>3. Visits for Children and Young People in Care were 94% in December. Year to date is 94%.</li> <li>4. Caseloads have reached the lowest levels in 12 months at 13 cases per worker with 11% holding more than 20 cases.</li> <li>5. Percentage of permanent social workers has been consistently above 80% for seven months and is at 86% in December. Empty seats remain low at 5% for this month.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our re-referral percentage remains high for December at 23%. However, the percentage has fallen for the third consecutive month.</li> <li>2. So far this year, 25% of our children were not seen in the 3 day timescale in Child and Family Assessments.</li> <li>3. So far this year, our Section 47s with an outcome of No Further Action is 43%.</li> <li>4. Case supervision over last quarter was 83%. In December 2019 case supervision was 88%.</li> <li>5. Worker supervision for December was 81% for Operational Teams.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-Referral rates. Understand if cases are stepped down too quickly and work across the service to understand the underlying causes for re-referrals and provide challenge where necessary. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>2. Assessments Child Seen in 3 days. We will continue to encourage social workers to input their day 3 visits in the Child and Family assessment as soon as these have been undertaken. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>3. NFA Cases. Consider all cases as they come over from MASH before recording them as NFA. Ensure that there is robust challenge of threshold decisions to reduce the number of cases that are NFA'd to build on positive progress made. <b>Lead: MASH and Assessment Team Managers</b></li> <li>4. Supervision. Continue to prioritise completing supervision with staff on a regular basis using a Signs of Safety approach ensuring that supervision is recorded at the time. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>5. We have a "bottom line" that all case summaries should be completed and updated in timescale. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> </ol>

## Referrals and Early Help



Source of Contacts and Referrals	Early Help Contacts	% of EH Contacts	MASH & DA Hub Contacts	% of MASH & DA Hub Contacts	Total Referrals	% of Referrals	% of Contacts Progressed to Referral*
Anonymous	1	0%	3	1%	0	0%	0%
Education Services	4	1%	8	2%	3	3%	38%
Health services - A&E (accident and	20	7%	7	2%	4	4%	57%
Health services - General Practitioner (GP)	1	0%	6	1%	0	0%	0%
Health services - Health Visitor	0	0%	10	2%	2	2%	20%
Health services - Other eg. hospice	0	0%	1	0%	1	1%	100%
Health services - Other primary health	27	10%	20	5%	8	9%	40%
Health Services - Other	21	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Health services - School Nurse	0	0%	9	2%	7	8%	78%
Individual - family member / relative /	8	3%	5	1%	2	2%	40%
Individual - self	2	1%	2	0%	0	0%	0%
LA Services - External/other LA	12	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
LA services - social care, for example, from another local authority's adults	52	19%	41	10%	24	26%	59%
LA Services - Other internal	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Other - including children's centres, independent agency providers or	15	6%	4	1%	0	0%	0%
Other Legal Agency - incl. courts, probation, immigration, CAFCASS or	5	2%	10	2%	2	2%	20%
Police	82	30%	229	57%	19	20%	8%
Schools	16	6%	46	11%	21	23%	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		<b>401</b>		<b>93</b>		<b>23%</b>

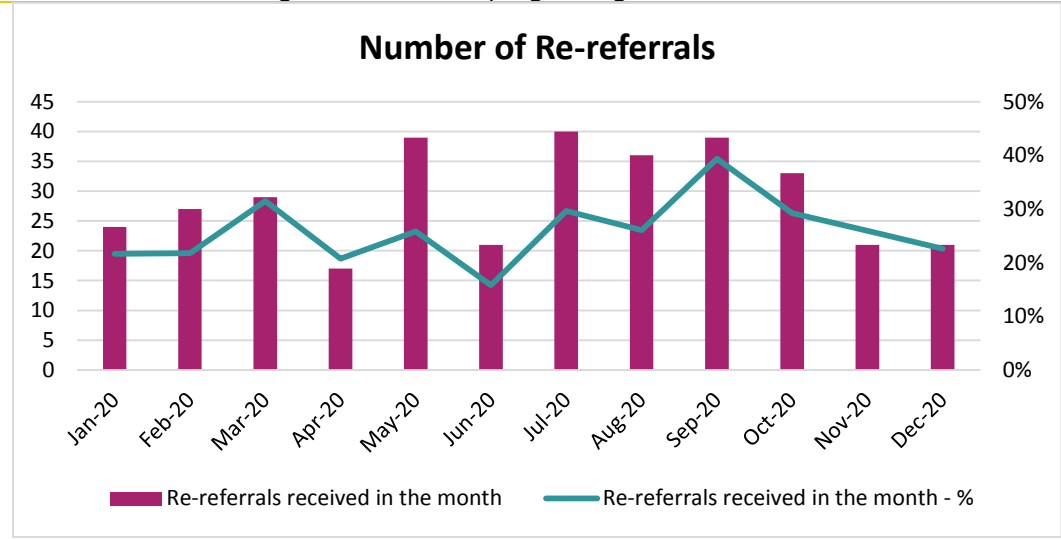
**Contacts and Referrals:** April-December Contact reporting has been adjusted to reflect the processes within the MASH Team. The 'Police Notification of Domestic Abuse' Contacts are screened by the Domestic Abuse Hub. In December, 237 Contacts came directly into MASH, 164 Contacts went to the Domestic Abuse Hub and 270 Contacts went to the Early Help Hub. In December, 23% of contacts progressed to referral. The YTD figure is 18%.

December 2019 YTD figure for contacts progressing was 23%.

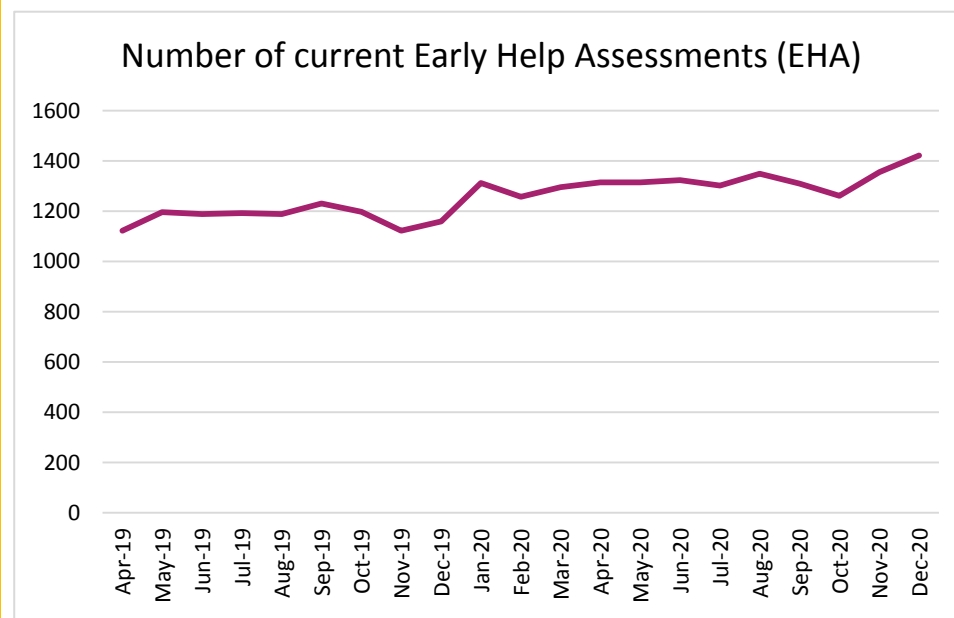
**Contact & Referrals Management:** The above graph shows the percentage of MASH Contacts which have been managed in 24hrs, the percentage of Domestic Abuse Hub Contacts managed in 48hrs timescales and the percentage of Early Help Hub Contacts managed in 72hrs. The timeliness for December was 98% managed in 24hrs for the MASH Contacts, 100% managed in 48hrs for the DA Hub Contacts and 99.6% managed in 72hrs for Early Help Hub Contacts. From September, non-working days are no longer being included in calculating the timeliness of Contacts.

**Contact/Referral by agency:** As can be seen from this table, the majority of our activity into MASH and the DA Hub continues to be driven by the Police. In December, the Early Help Hub received the majority of contacts from the Police, Local Authority Services and Health.

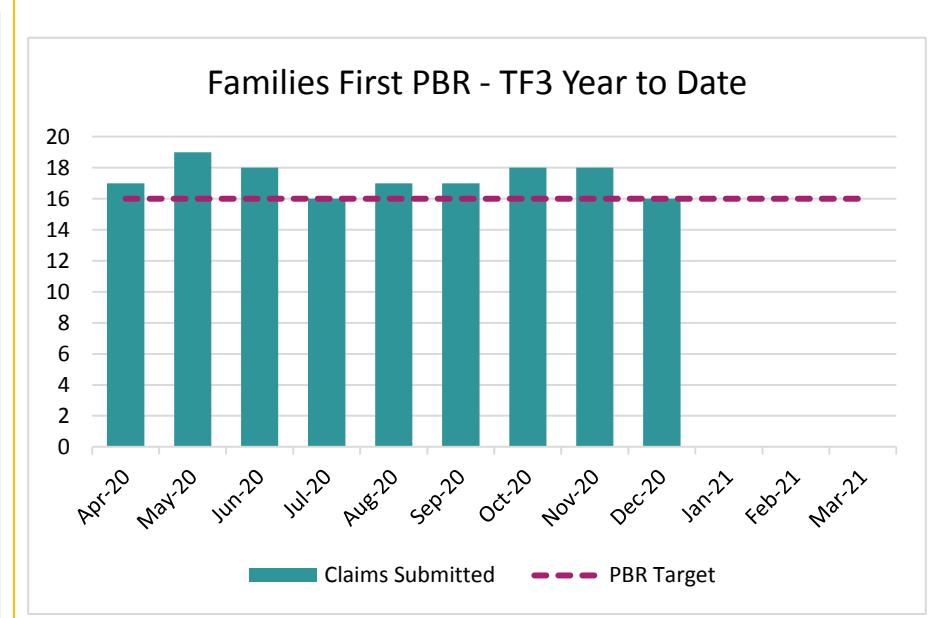
\*Contacts into MASH that progressed includes those stepped up from Early Help Hub.



**Early Help Interventions** As can be seen from the graph below, the number of cases open to Early Help had stabilised but there has been an increase in the last couple of months.



**Families First** The TF Phase 2 programme ended at the end of March. The graph below shows the target for the new TF3 programme which began in April. Since April, the number of claims submitted has met or exceeded the target.



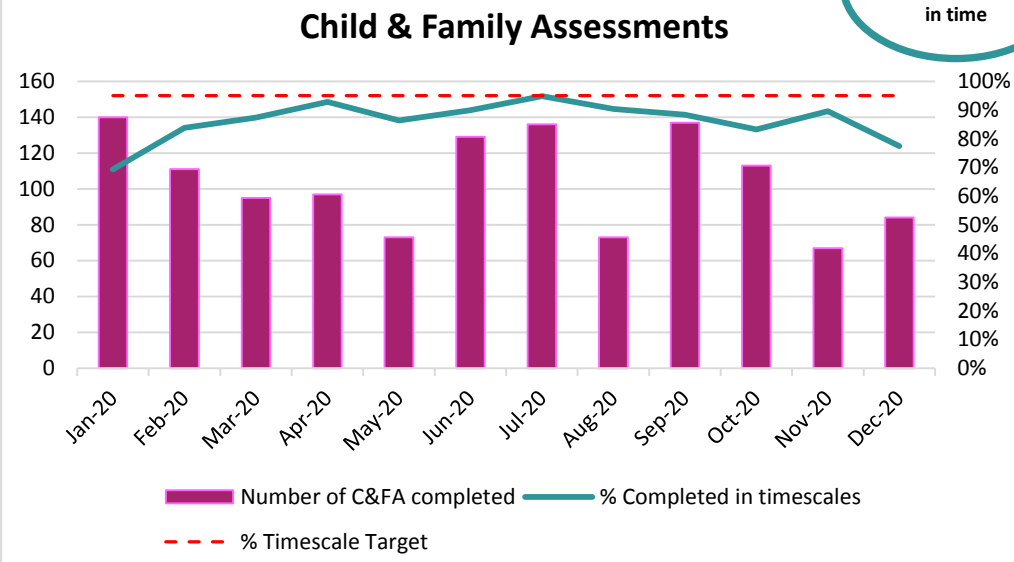
**Percentage of Re-referrals:** The proportion of re-referrals in December was 23%, which is a 3% point decrease from November. December 2019 YTD figure was 19%.

Hfd Dec	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
23%	26%	21%	20%	22%	19%	19%	20%

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

## Assessments

65 out of 84 Assessments in time



Assessments	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year to Date
Completed in time %	90%	95%	90%	88%	83%	90%	77%	88%
Child seen in 3 days%	67%	82%	62%	79%	81%	66%	73%	75%

December 2019 YTD figure for assessments completed in time was 80%.

Assessments in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Dec	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	Ofsted Good*	Ofsted Out'ing *
77%	88%	83%	79%	84%	81%	84%	87%

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

**Outcomes of Child & Family Assessment:** Some referrals will have an outcome of a Strategy Meeting as well as an Assessment. The table below separates the Assessment outcomes by cases that had a Strategy Meeting as well as an Assessment (Strategy Meeting), there were none of these in December, and those that only had an Assessment (No-Strategy Meeting).

Referral Outcome	Assessment Outcome	Number and %* of total assessments
Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	0 (0%)
	Continue with current plan	0 (0%)
	Close Case	0 (0%)
No-Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	13 (15%)
	Strategy Meeting	6 (7%)
	Continue with current plan	13 (15%)
	Close Case	49 (58%)
	Outcome not yet recorded	3 (4%)

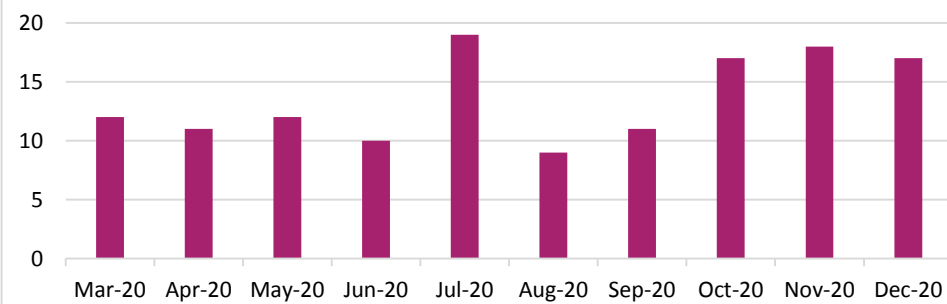
**Actions Resulting from Case Closure:** The following table shows what support was provided after the case was closed to Social Care in December.

Closed Case from:	Closed Case Next Actions	Number and %* of total closed cases
Assesment with a Strategy Meeting	Early Help	0 (0%)
	Family Support	0 (0%)
	Other Agencies	0 (0%)
	No Further Action	0 (0%)
Assessments with No-Strategy Meeting	Early Help	12 (24%)
	Family Support	1 (2%)
	Other Agencies	17 (35%)
	No Further Action	19 (39%)

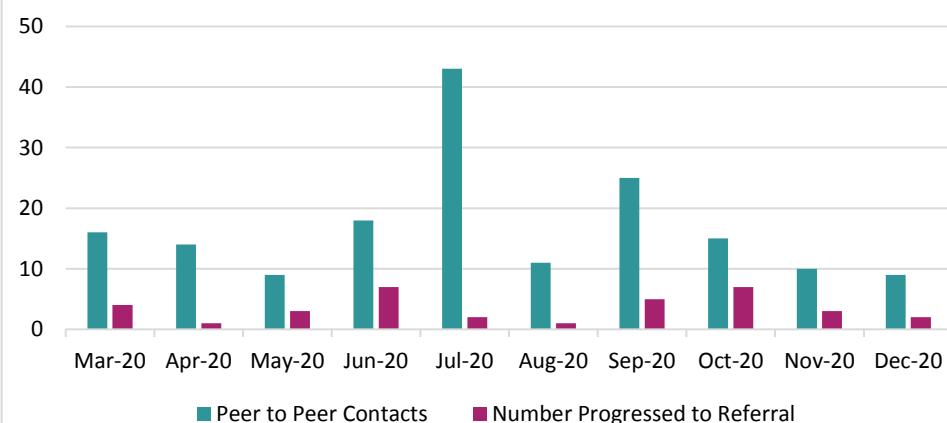
\*Due to rounding, the % may not add up to exactly 100%.

55 out of 57 in timescale

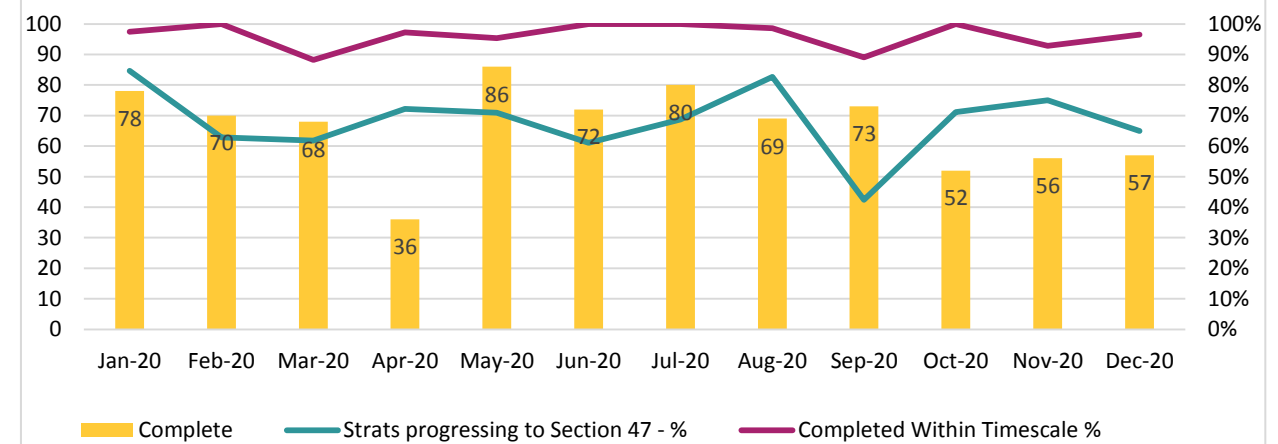
Number of Child Exploitation Assessments per Month



Peer to Peer Contacts and Referrals in Month



Strategy discussions and % Progression to S47



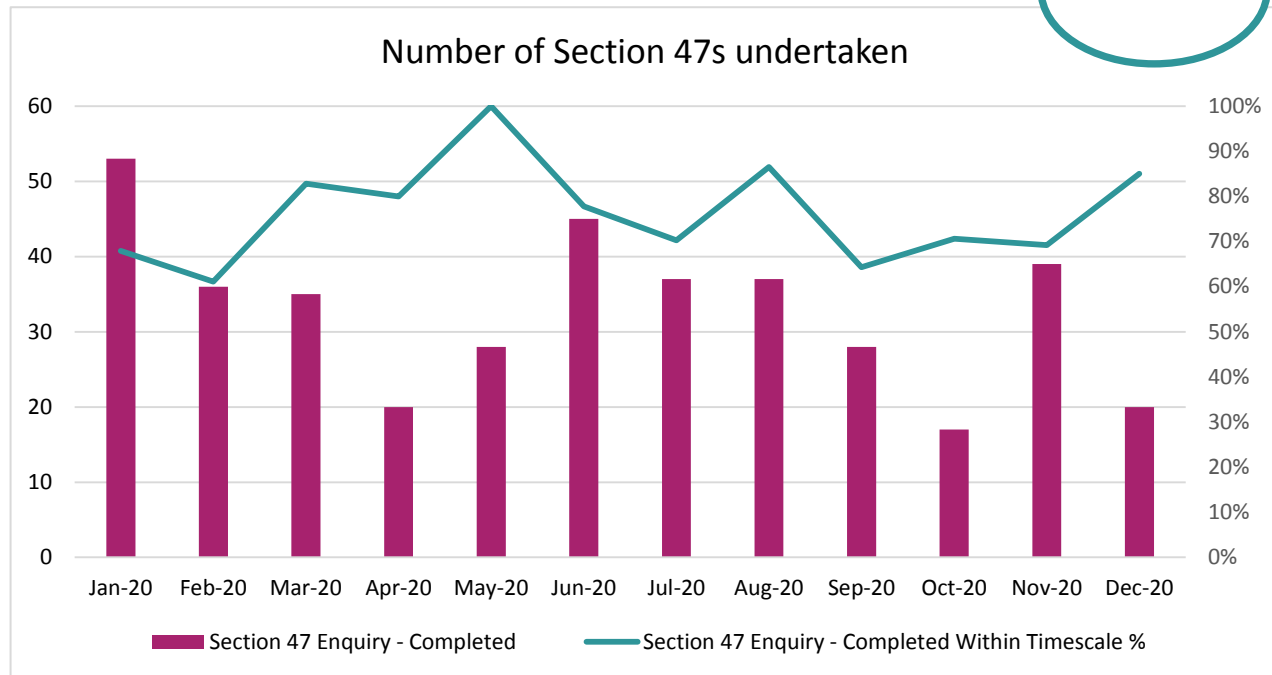
**Strategy Discussions:** During December, the number of Strategy Meetings increased by 1 from 56 in November to 57 in December. The % completed in timescales was 96% for December. The progression of cases to Section 47 during the month decreased from 75% in November to 65% in December.

Strategy Discussions	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year to Date
Completed in time %	100%	100%	99%	89%	100%	93%	96%	97%
Progrssion to S47	61%	69%	83%	42%	71%	75%	65%	67%

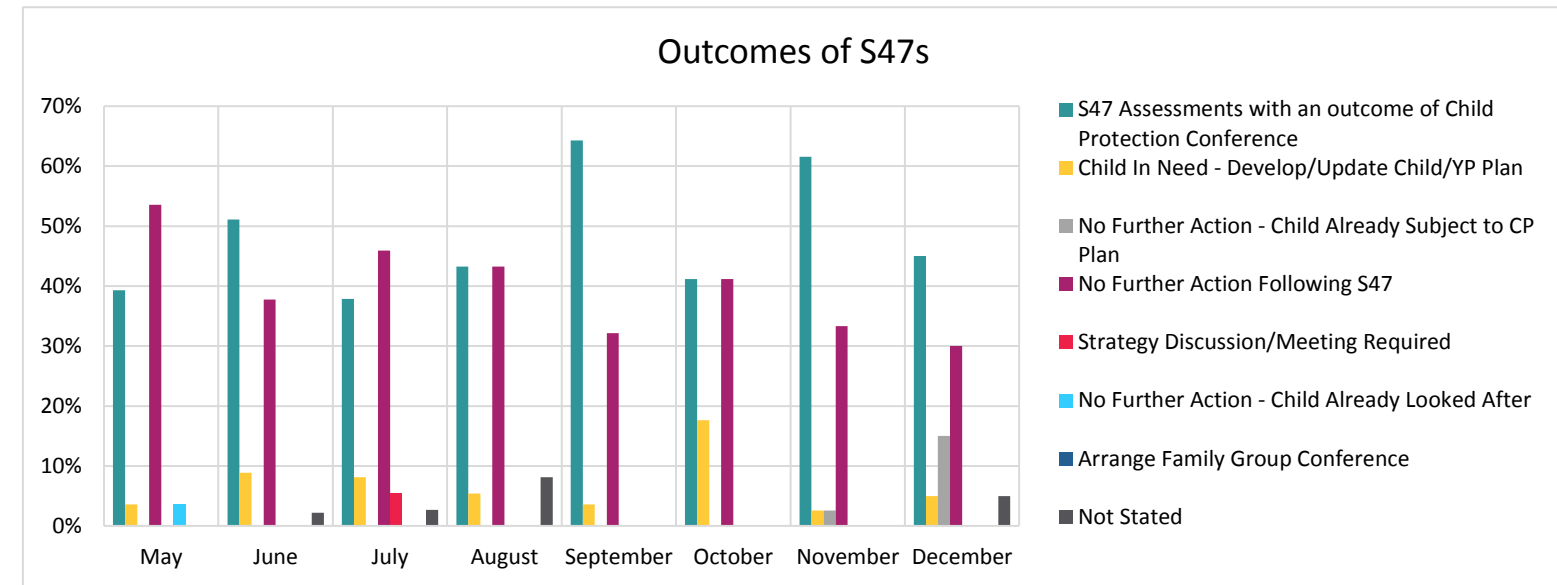
December 2019 YTD for Strategy Discussion in timescales was 98%.  
December 2019 YTD for Strategy Discussion progressing to S47 was 77%.



17 out of 20 S47s in time



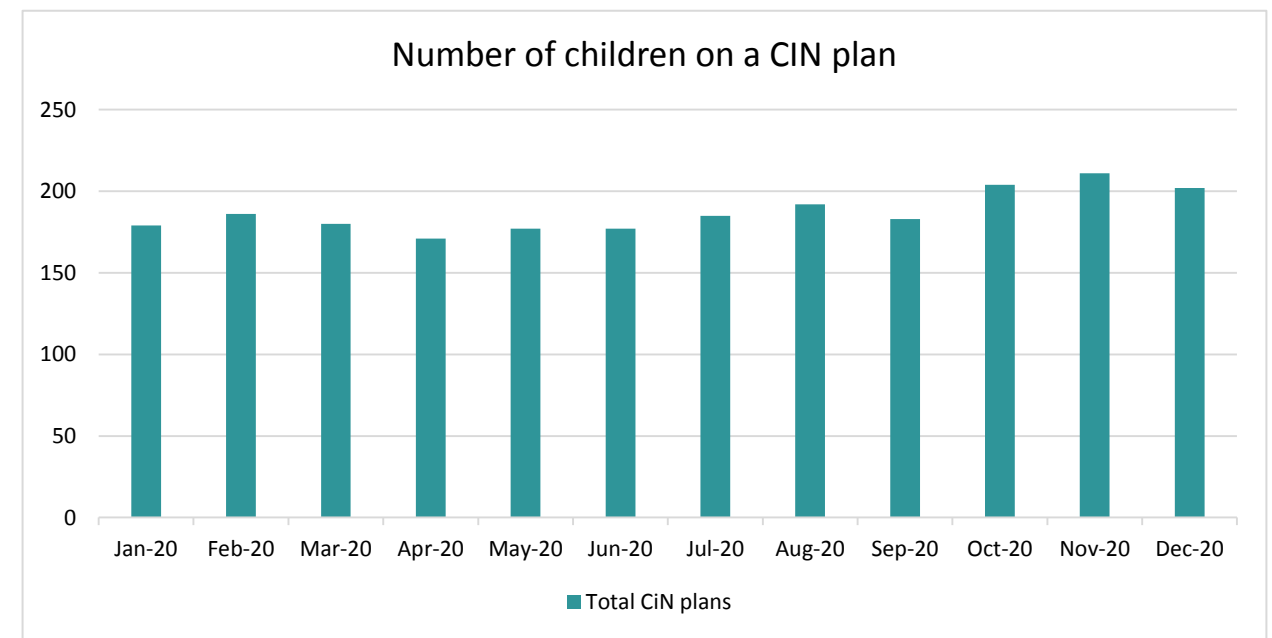
**Section 47s:**  
 The number of Section 47s completed in December decreased compared to November. 85% of Section 47s were completed in time in December which is a 16% point increase from November at 69% in timescales.  
**Year to date figure for 2020 is 78% of Section 47 in timescale.**  
**December 2019 YTD figures for Section 47 in timescale was 69%.**



**Section 47 Outcomes:**  
 The graph above shows the outcome of the 17 Section 47s completed in the period. In December, 9 (45%) were progressed to ICPC, 6 (30%) of Section 47s were NFA'd, 3 (15%) were already subject to a Child Protection Plan, 1 (5%) went to Child in Need and 1 (5%) the outcome was not stated.

	Herefordshire (@ Q2 2020/21)	West Midlands (2019/20)	England (2018/19)
Section 47 Rate per 10,000	137.4	176.7	168.3

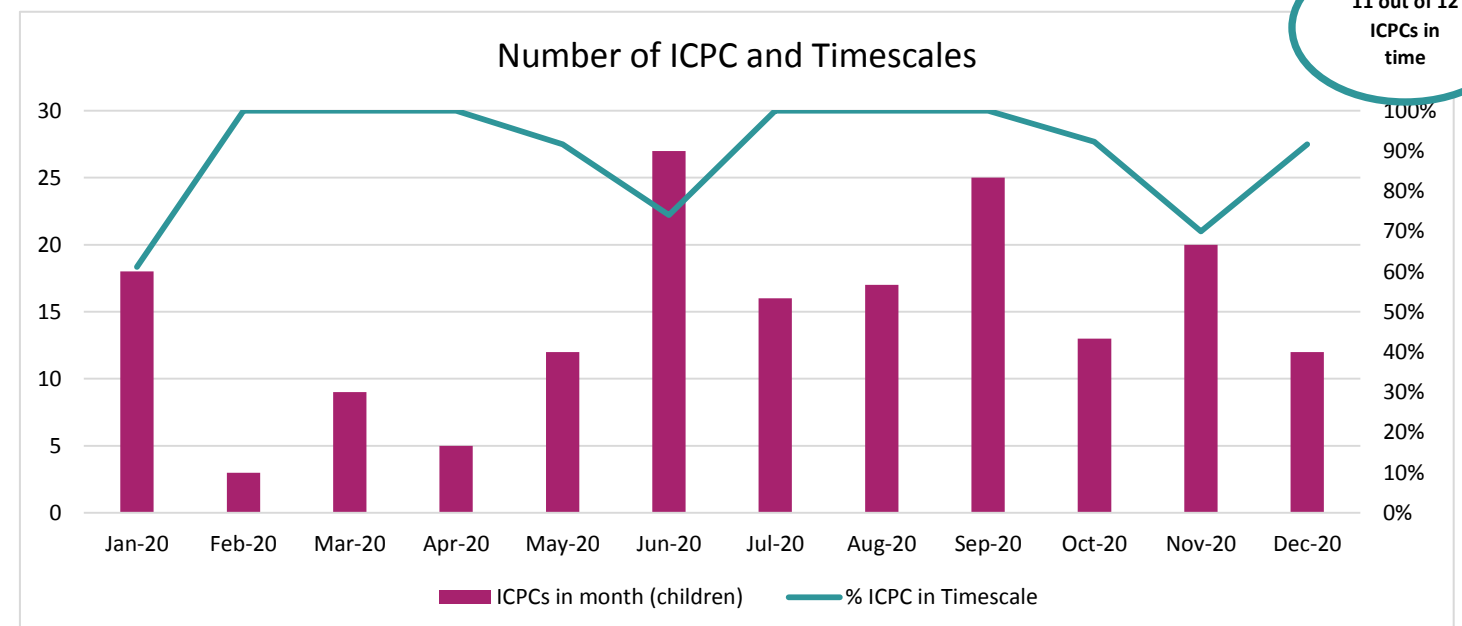
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**Number of children on a CIN Plan:**

The graph above shows the number of children on a CIN Plan. There has been a decrease in the number of children on a CIN plan during the last month from 211 children in November to 202 children in December.

11 out of 12 ICPCs in time



**Initial Child Protection Conferences:** In December, performance around ICPC timescales was 92%. 11 out of the 12 ICPCs this month were held in timescale.

**The year to date figure is 89% ICPC in timescale. The December 2019 year to date figure was 75%**

ICPCs in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Dec	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
92%	89%	79%	75%	83%	79%	82%	84%

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

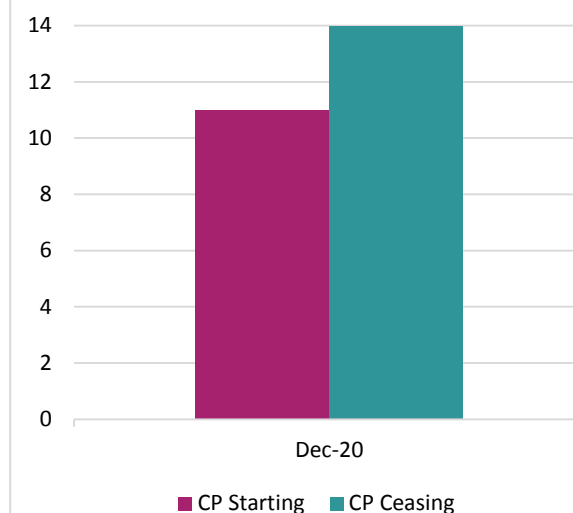
## Child Protection Plans

Number of Children on a Child Protection Plan



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

CP Starting & Ceasing in month



Current CP at Month End:

**127**

**Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans:**  
The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of December has decreased by 3 compared to the figure reported in November. In December 14 CP plans ceased. 11 CP plans ceased due to no longer meeting thresholds and 3 came into our care.

CP Rate (per 10,000)						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	Ofsted Good*	Ofsted Out'ing*
35	44	43	47	45	45	29

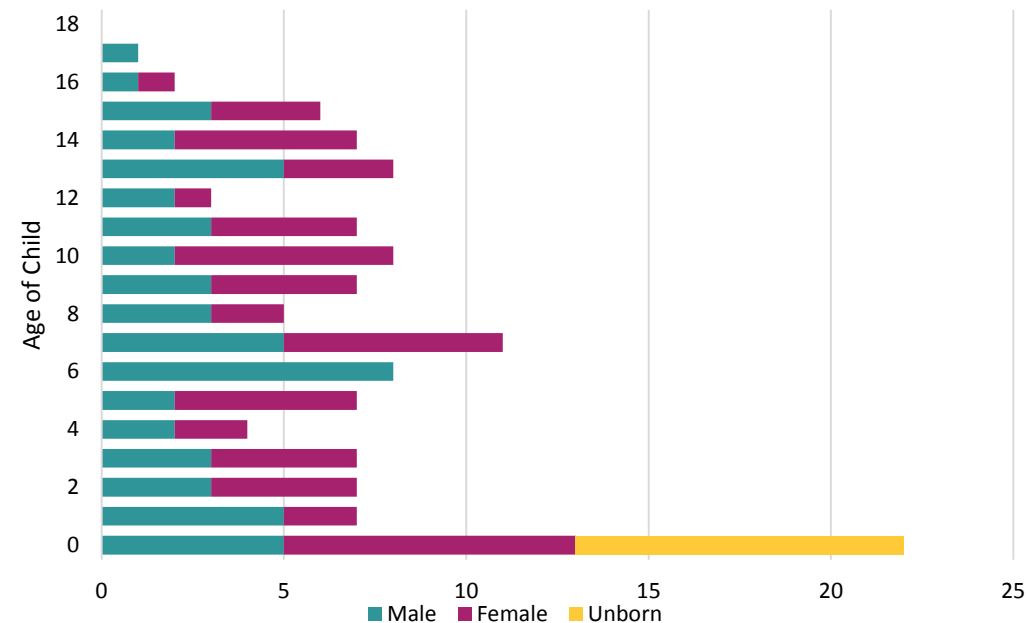
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & Ofsted).

Categories of Need in Child Protection Plans

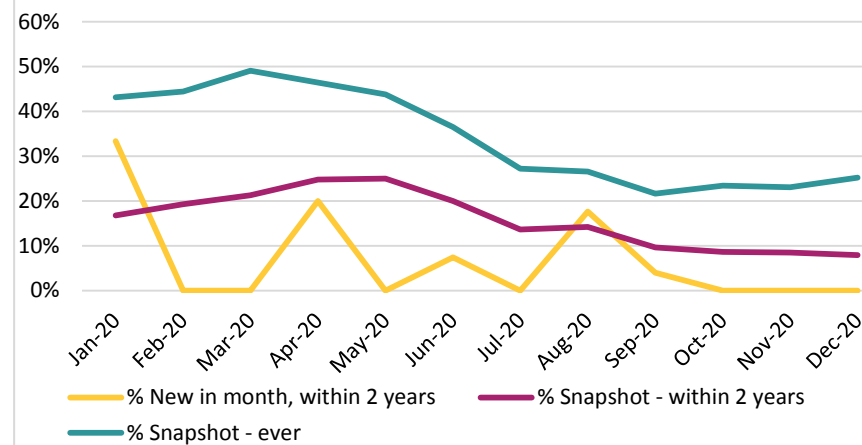
	May-20	June-20	July-20	Aug-20	Sept-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
<b>Emotional</b>	53 (55%)	60 (52%)	60 (58%)	68 (60%)	72 (58%)	71 (55%)	75 (58%)	76 (60%)
<b>Neglect</b>	43 (45%)	55 (48%)	43 (42%)	45 (40%)	42 (34%)	42 (33%)	40 (31%)	39 (31%)
<b>Physical</b>	0	0	0	0	3 (2%)	5 (4%)	5 (4%)	5 (4%)
<b>Sexual</b>	0	0	0	0	8 (6%)	10 (8%)	10 (8%)	7 (5%)

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

Age of current CP



Second or Subsequent CP Plan

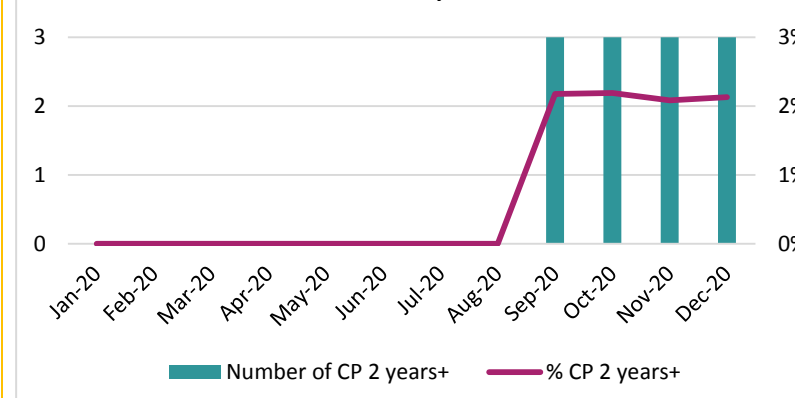


— **New in month, within 2 years:** New child protection plans where the child has previously had child protection plan in the last 2 years.  
 — **Snapshot - within 2 years:** All children who are currently subject to a child protection plan who have returned to child protection, having been removed from a plan in the last 2 years.  
 — **Snapshot - ever:** All children who are currently subject to a child protection plan who have returned to child protection, having previously been removed from a plan (no time limit) (CiN Census measure)

CP 2 <sup>nd</sup> and subsequent – within 2 years			
Hfd December	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*
8%	-	-	10.2%

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (West Midlands).

Number of children on CP plans for more than 2 years

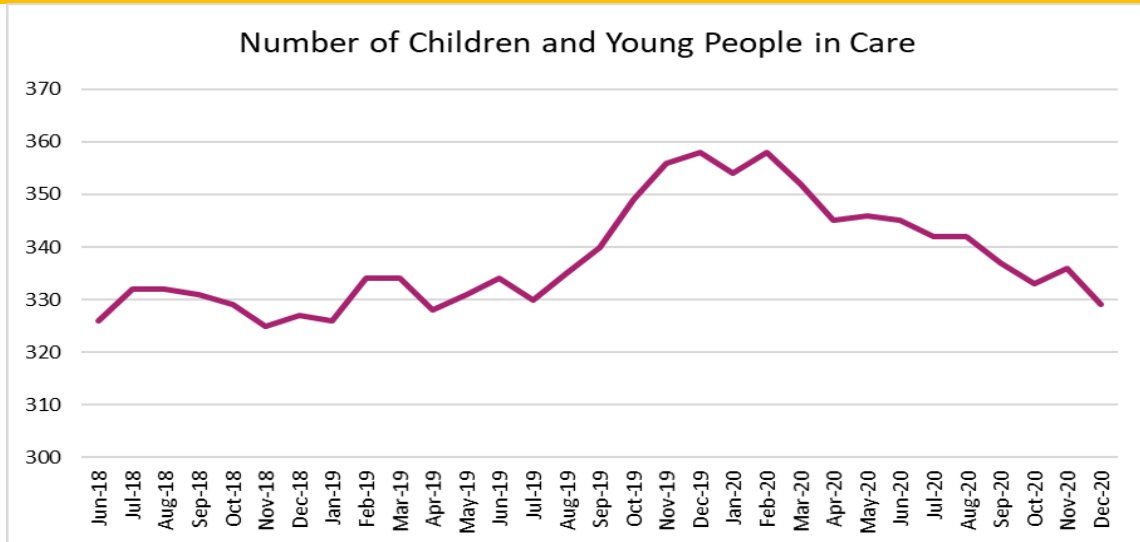


**Child Protection Plans open for 2 or more years:** From September - December, there was a family group of three children that had been on a plan for over 2 years.

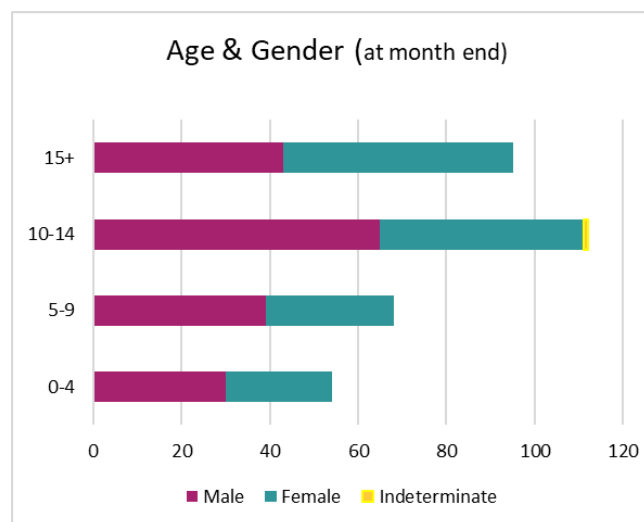
CP 2+ years (for those currently CP)				
Hfd December	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*
3	3	2	3	1

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

## Children and Young People in Care

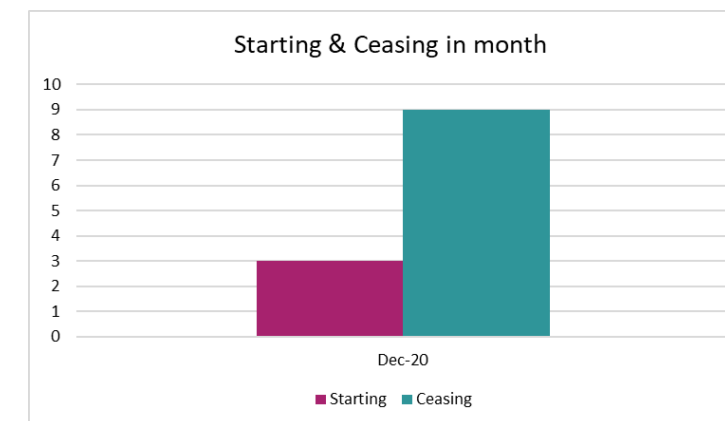


\*Note: This graph does not include retrospective action taken in Mosaic.



Number of Children and Young People in Care at Month End:

# 329



**New Children and Young People in Care in Period:** During December three children came into care. One child aged 0-4 years, one aged 5-9 years and one aged 15+.

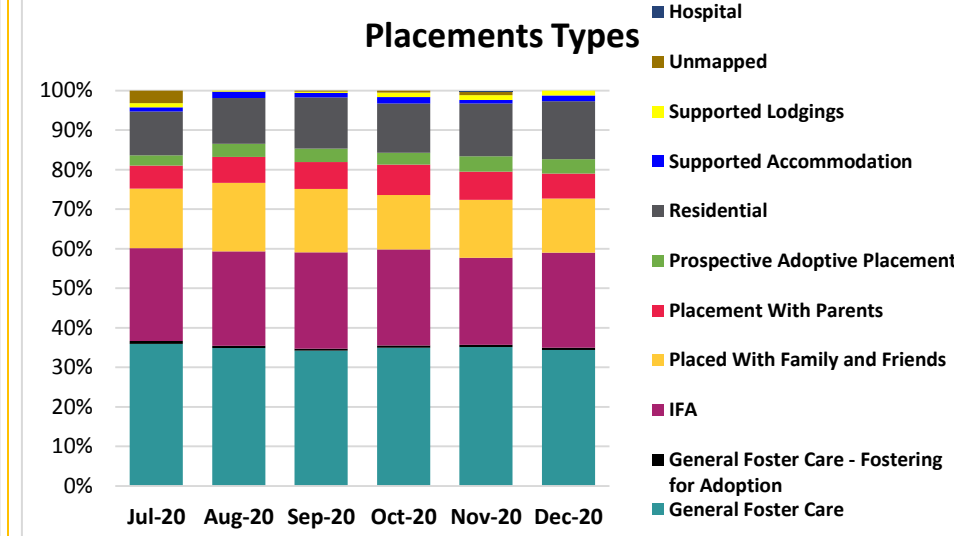
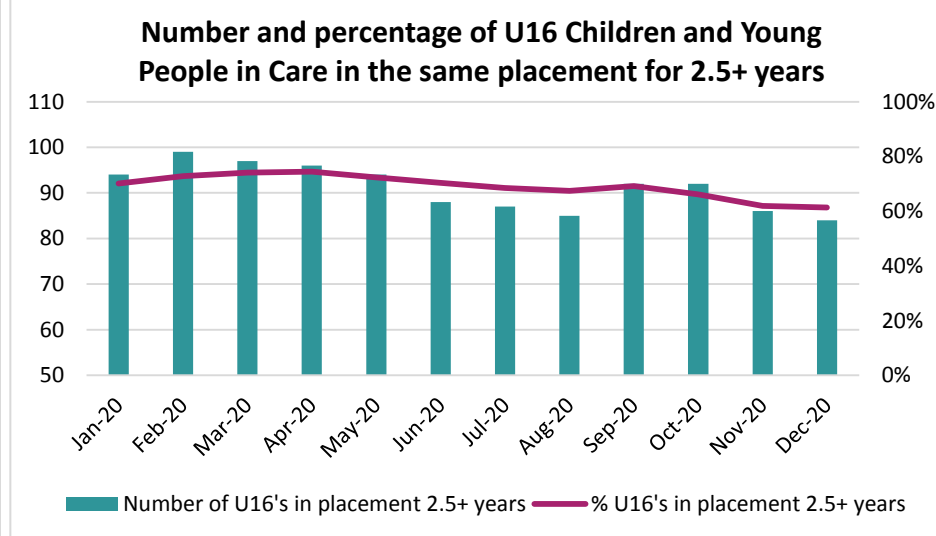
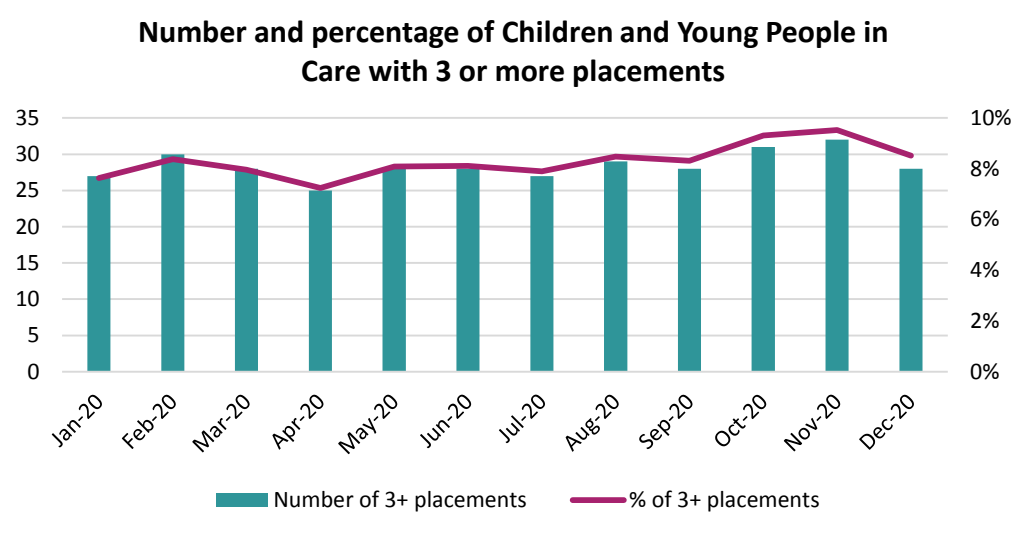
**Children and Young People in Care Cessations:** Nine children ceased being in care in December. Six had a Special Guardianship Order, two returned home and one was adopted.

**Children and Young People in Care Numbers:** As at the end of December, the number of Children and Young People in Care was 329.

Children and Young People in Care Rate (per 10,000)						
Herefordshire December	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
91	65	54	82	55	66	48

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

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**Number of Children and Young People in Care 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. December has fallen to 8.5% from 9.5% in November.

% of Children with 3 or more placements in last 12 months						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
8.5%	10%	11%	10%	10%	10%	12%

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

**Children in the same placement for 2.5+ years:** In December, the number of children who have remained in the same placement for 2.5+ years is 84 children, which is 61% of the under 16 Children and Young People in Care cohort.

% Looked After Children 2.5+ yrs in same placement						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
61%	69%	67%	68%	72%	69%	68%

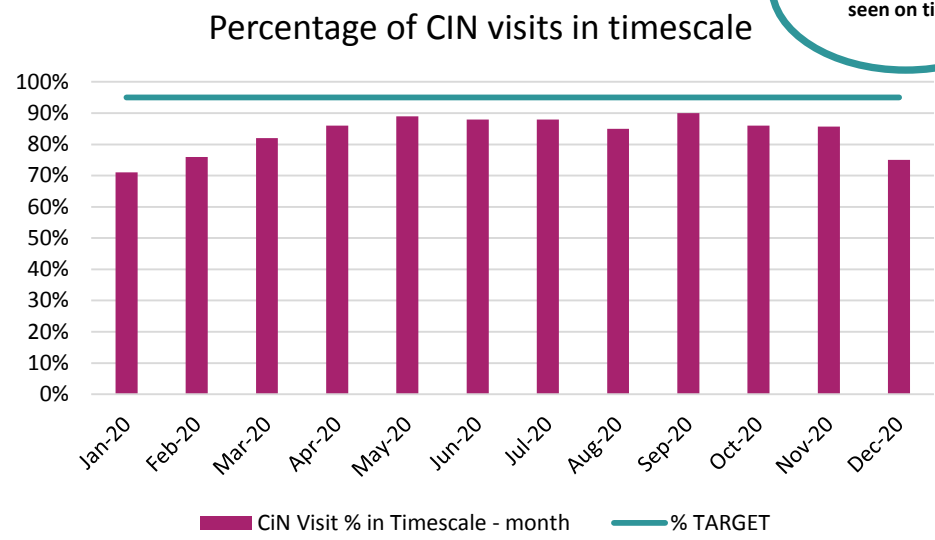
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

**Current Children and Young People in Care Placements:**

In December, 34% of Children and Young People in Care were placed with General Foster Carers and 24% were placed with Independent Foster Agencies. 20% of our Children and Young People in Care were placed with Parents or Family and Friends, 15% were in Residential and 4% were in adoption related placements. The remaining were placed in Supported Accommodation and Supported Lodgings.



92 children out of 123 were seen on time



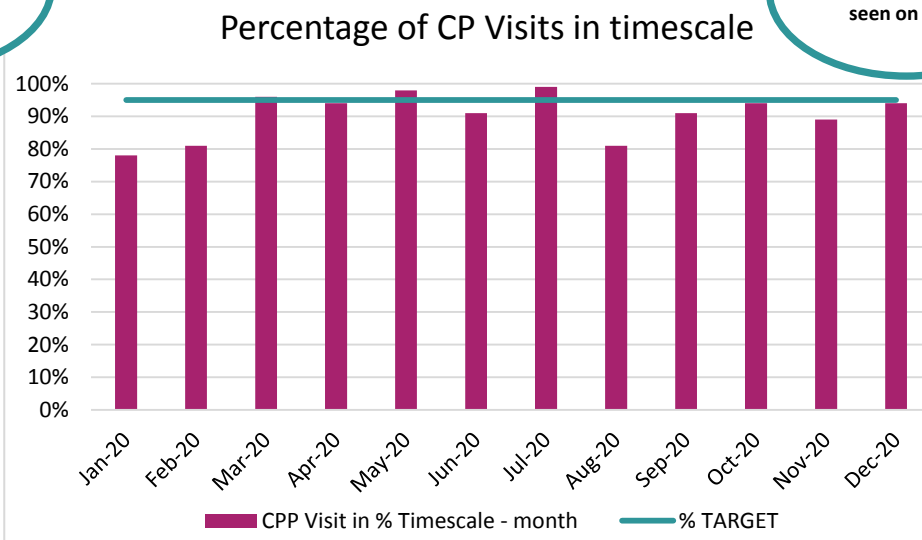
The above chart shows CIN visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of December 75% of CIN visits were completed in timescale. This is a decrease from last month.

Year to date is 86% and is below 95% target.

\*This data has come from 4<sup>th</sup> January 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.

### Visits

109 children out of 116 were seen on time

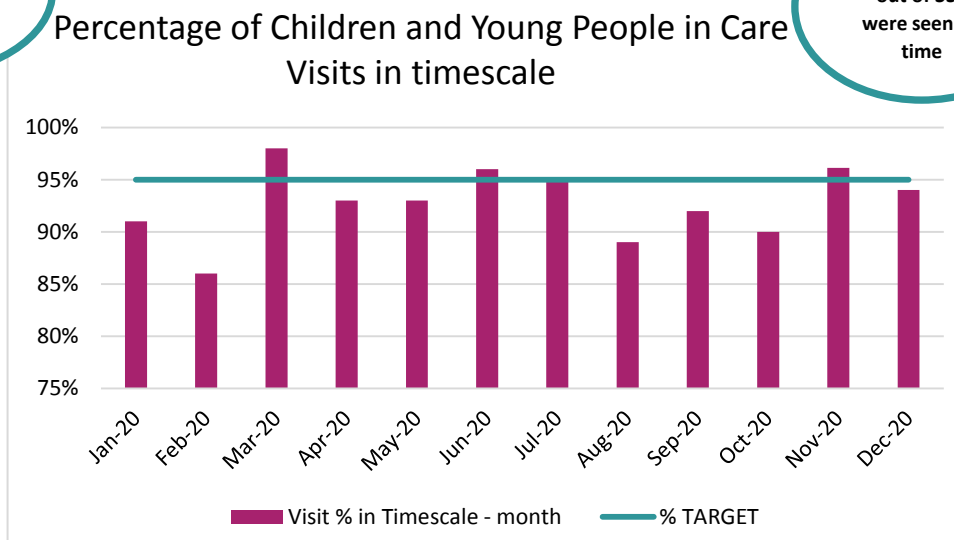


The above chart shows CP visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of December, 94% of CP visits were completed in timescale. This is a increase from last month which was 89%.

Year to date is 92% which is below the 95% target.

\*This data has come from 4<sup>th</sup> January 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.

310 children out of 331 were seen on time



The above chart shows Children and Young People in Care visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of December, 94% of Children and Young People in Care visits were completed in timescale. This is a small decrease from last month which was 96% and is just below the target. Year to date is 94% which is slightly below the 95% target.

\*This data has come from 4<sup>th</sup> January Weekly Visits Report. The number of allocated cases do not match the actual number of cases due to new Children and Young People in Care cases not requiring a visit in the month and ceased cases that have had a visit.

### Private Fostering

Number of Privately Fostered Children							
Month	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
Number of children at the end of the month	2	1	1	2	2	1	4
Number of children started Private Fostering	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Number of children ceased Private Fostering	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

At the end of December, there were four children who were Privately Fostered.

Visits in Timescale							
Month	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
Number of children with a visit in timescale	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
% of children with a visit in timescale	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%

50% of Private Fostering visits were in timescale during December. Two visits were not completed because the children were not in the county.

### Care Leavers

	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total	Target	Progress Against Target
Cohort	27	39	28	94		
LA in Touch	26 (96%)	36 (92%)	26 (93%)	88 (94%)	92%	Exceeded
In Suitable Accommodation	24 (89%)	34 (87%)	26 (93%)	84 (89%)	87%	Exceeded
In Education, Employment or Training	16 (59%)	23 (59%)	17 (61%)	56 (60%)	57%	Exceeded

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

Last year comparison:

December 2019: 19-21 year olds in-touch: 79%; Suitable Accommodation: 77%; EET: 42%

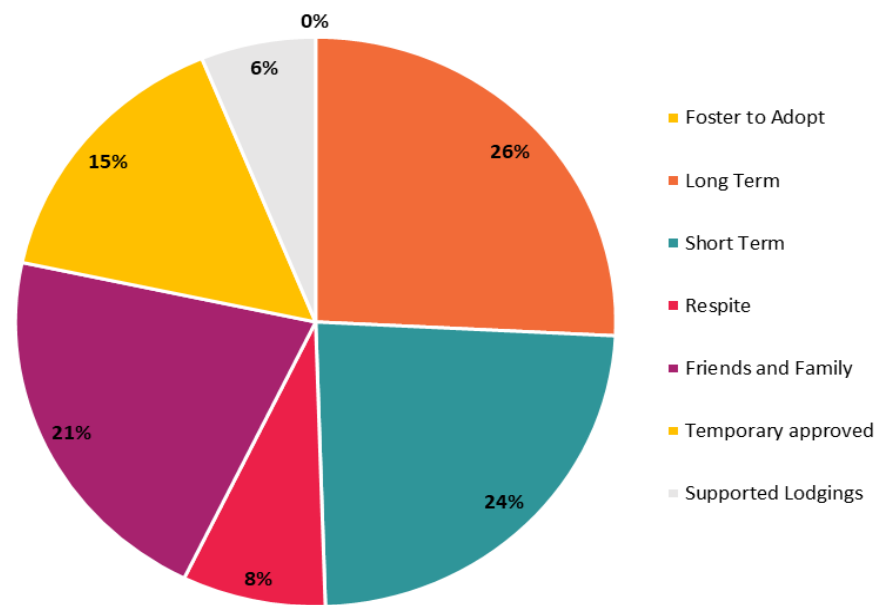
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Touch						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
94%	89%	91%	90%	92%	89%	87%
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Suitable Accommodation						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
89%	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*
60%	52%	53%	51%	57%	55%	55%

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

## Fostering & Adoption

### Fostering

Number of Foster Carers by Type



	Number	% of Total Carers
<b>General Foster Carers</b>		
Short Term	46	26%
Long Term	50	29%
Respite	15	9%
Foster to Adopt	0	0%
<b>Total General Foster</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Friends and Family</b>		
Friends and Family	41	23%
Temporary Approved	10	6%
<b>Total Friends and Family</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Supported Lodgings</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7%</b>

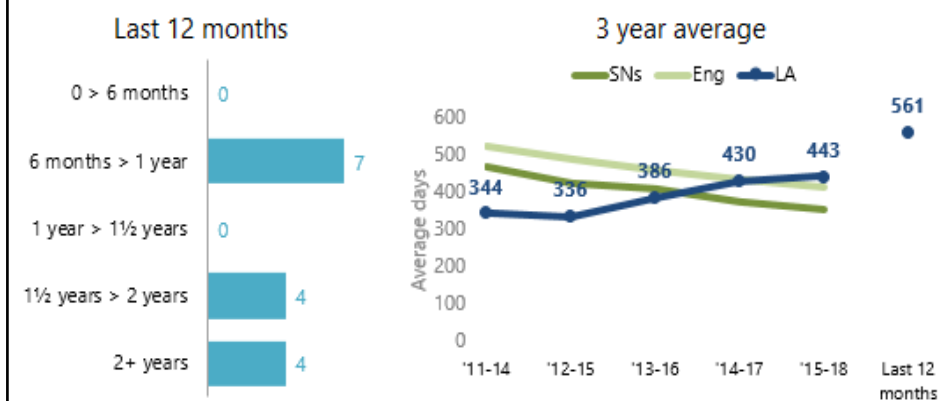
At the end of December there were 111 General Foster Carers which include Long Term, Short Term, Respite and Foster to Adopt Carers. There were 51 Family and Friends Carers which include Family and Friends and Temporary Approved Family and Friends. There was 12 Supported Lodgings providers.

There is still a small amount of work required to ensure that Staying Put and Short Breaks Carers are accurately captured. Trend data will be included in this report as soon as it is available.

### Adoption

(A10) Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children

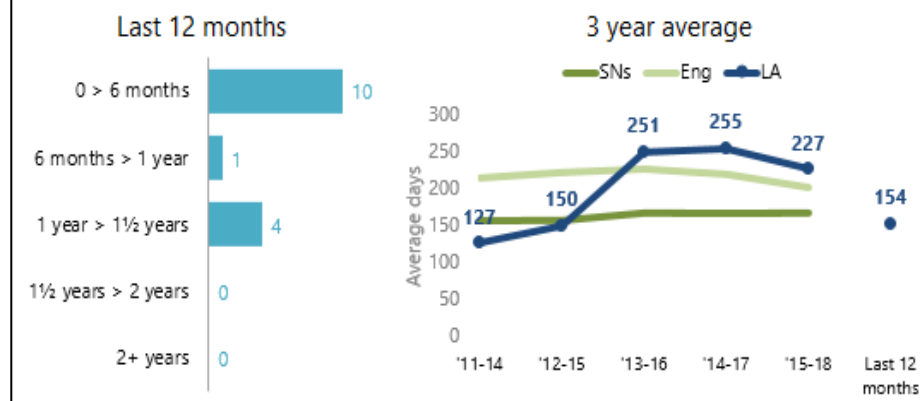
**561 days** Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family for adopted children (adjusted for foster carer adoptions)  
15 children



Herefordshire has been an increase in the average number of days it has taken between the date the child entered care and the date of the adoption order. The number of days for seven of the children in the cohort is in line with the benchmark performance. However the number of days for four of the children has disproportionately impacted the overall average.

(A2) Time between placement order and deciding on a match

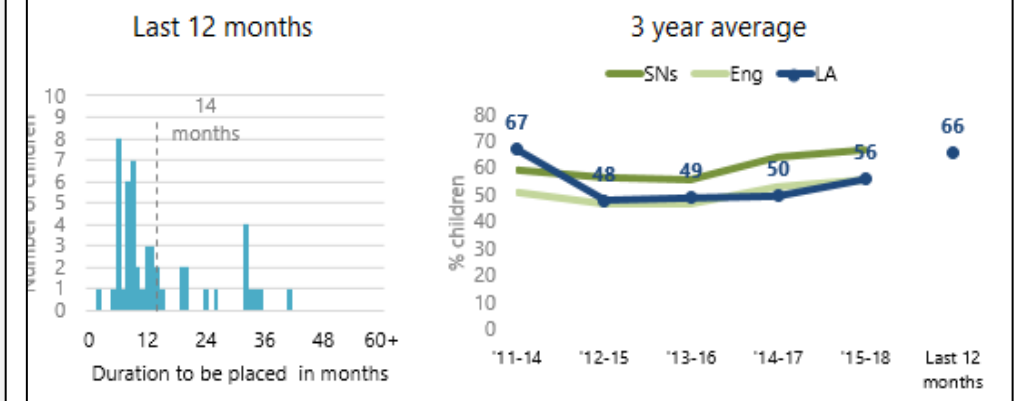
**154 days** The average number of days from the date of the placement order to the date the child was matched to prospective adopters  
15 children



In the last 12 months, Herefordshire has seen a decrease in the time taken between a placement order and when the child was matched to prospective adopters.

(A3) Time between entering care and placed for adoption

**66%** Children placed who waited less than the threshold between entering care and being placed for adoption (threshold: 14 months for 2013-16)  
33/50 children



66% of Herefordshire children who were placed for adoption waited less than the 14 month threshold. This has gone up by 3 percentage points from last month which was 63%. It is better than England's average and is comparable to our statistical neighbours.

## Supervisions

Case Supervision												
83% of Child in Need Plan cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				86% of Child Protection cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				82% of Children and Young People in Care cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				
	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Over 3 Months to 6 Months	Over 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	No Complete Supervision Step	Total	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Within 3 Months
Child in Need	47	52	70	22	1	8	3	203	23%	26%	34%	83%
Child Protection	37	33	39	17			1	127	29%	26%	31%	86%
Child in Care	74	98	101	51	4	1	2	331	22%	30%	31%	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>83%</b>

Case Supervisions @ 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021: 83% of cases have a supervision within the last 3 months.

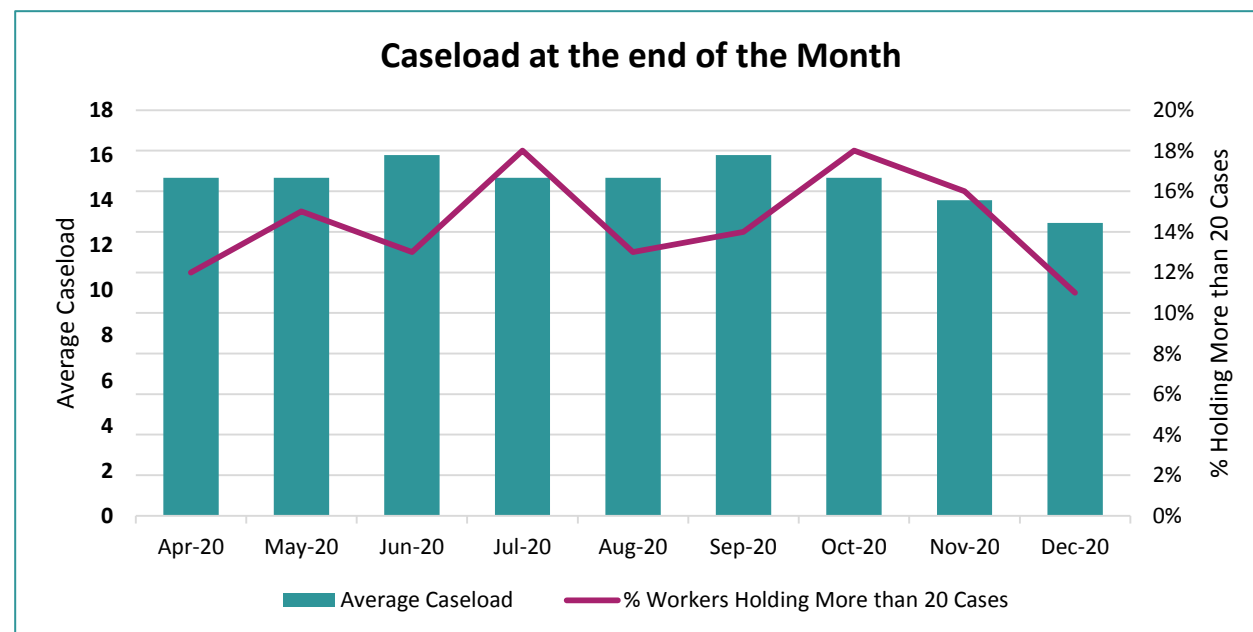
Last year comparison @ 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019: 88% of cases had a supervision within the previous 3 months.

Worker Supervision								
	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	December 2020	Direction of Performance
Operational Teams	83%	89%	77%	74%	85%	78%	81%	↑
Business Support	96%	87%	74%	75%	98%	81%	98%	↑

Last year comparison @ 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

- 69% Operational Teams had a worker supervision in the month
- 33% Business Support had a worker supervision in the month

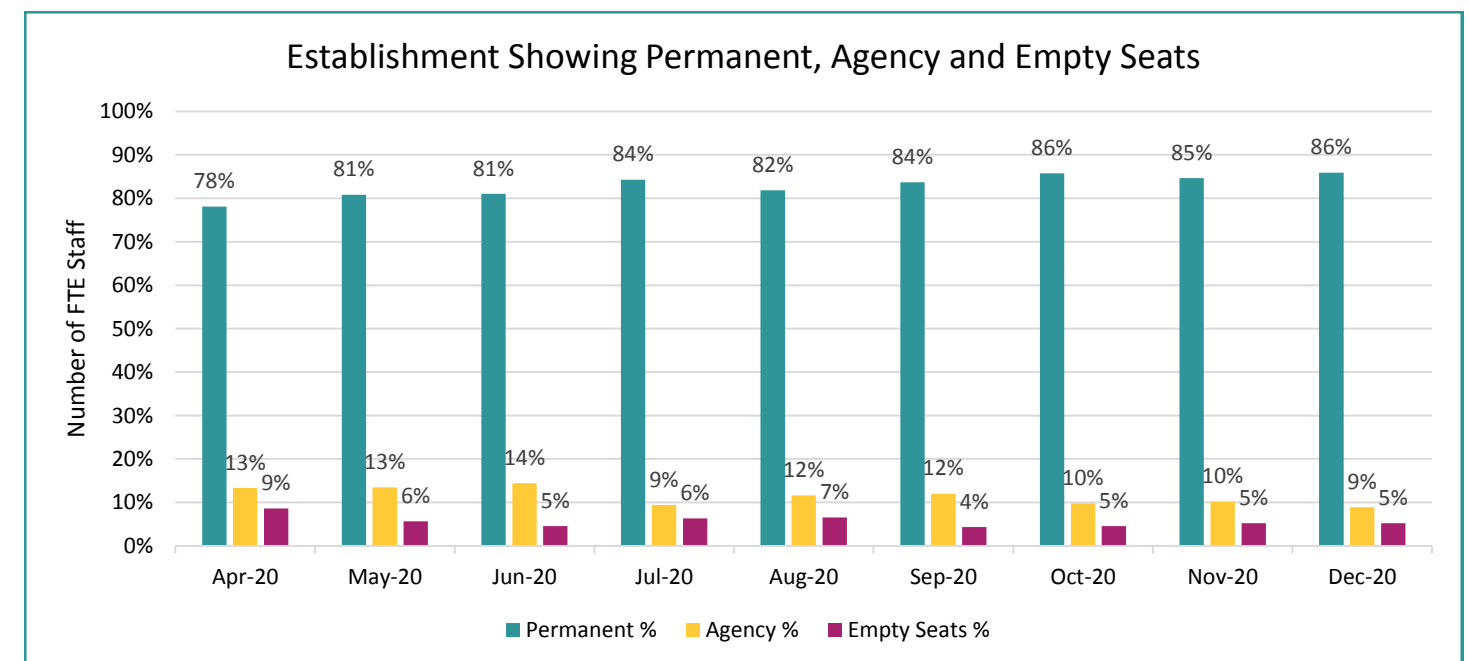
## Caseload



Caseloads have remained consistent over the last 6 months and for December were at an average of 13 cases per worker with 11% of workers holding more than 20 cases.

Last year comparison: At the end of December 2019 the average case load across the service was 22 with 42% holding more than 20 cases.

## Vacancies



The % of social workers employed on a permanent basis has seen some consistency in the last 6 months and is at 86% this month. Over the same period, we have seen a small fluctuation in the employment of agency workers with this month at 9%, which is 1% point lower than last month. Empty seats percentage is the same as last month at 5%.

## Audits

In December, no audits were completed.

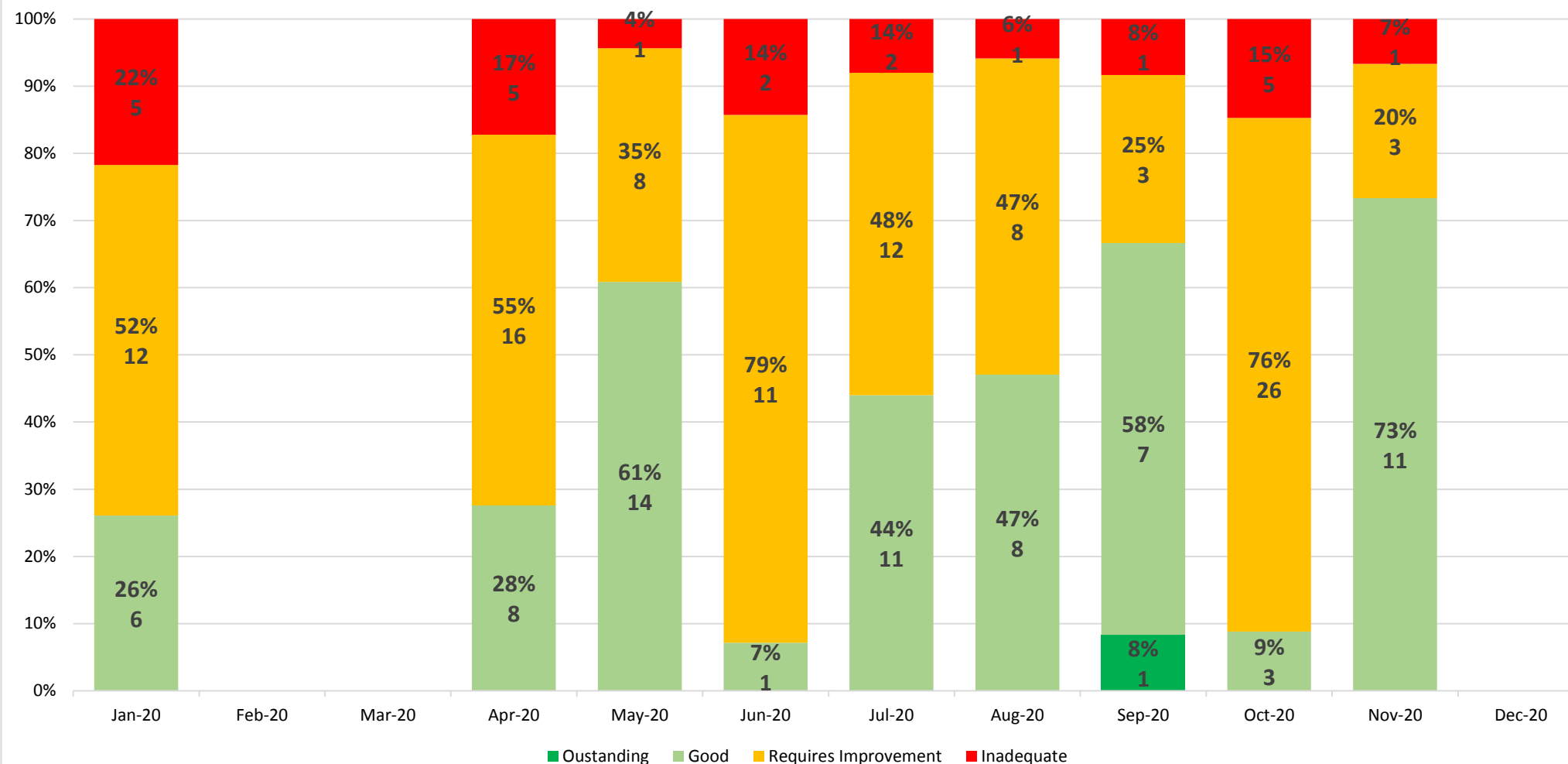
A collaborative audit approach is currently being piloted and a short break in the audit process in December was to allow for the sharing of experience and feedback of the new process. Reporting on the outcomes of the collaborative audits will begin in January.

Comparison to Last Year			
Year to Date	2019/2020	2020/2021	Direction of Performance
Outstanding	0%	1%	↑
Good	22%	37%	↑
Requires Improvement	40%	51%	↑
Inadequate	36%	11%	↓
Not Completed	2%	0%	↓

• Due to rounding not all percentages add up to 100%.

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Percentage and Number Of Audits Completed





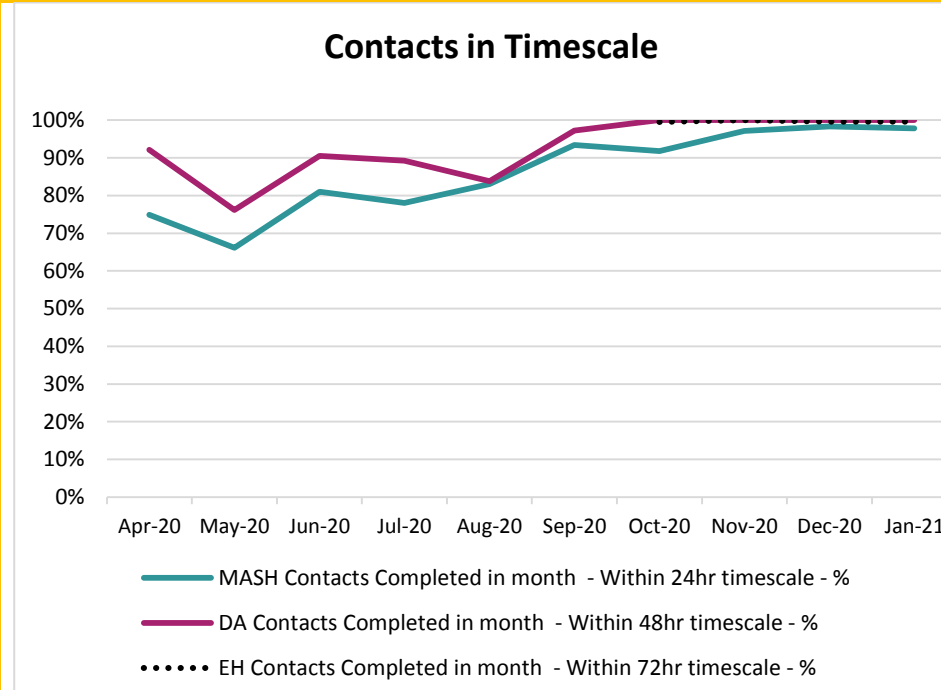
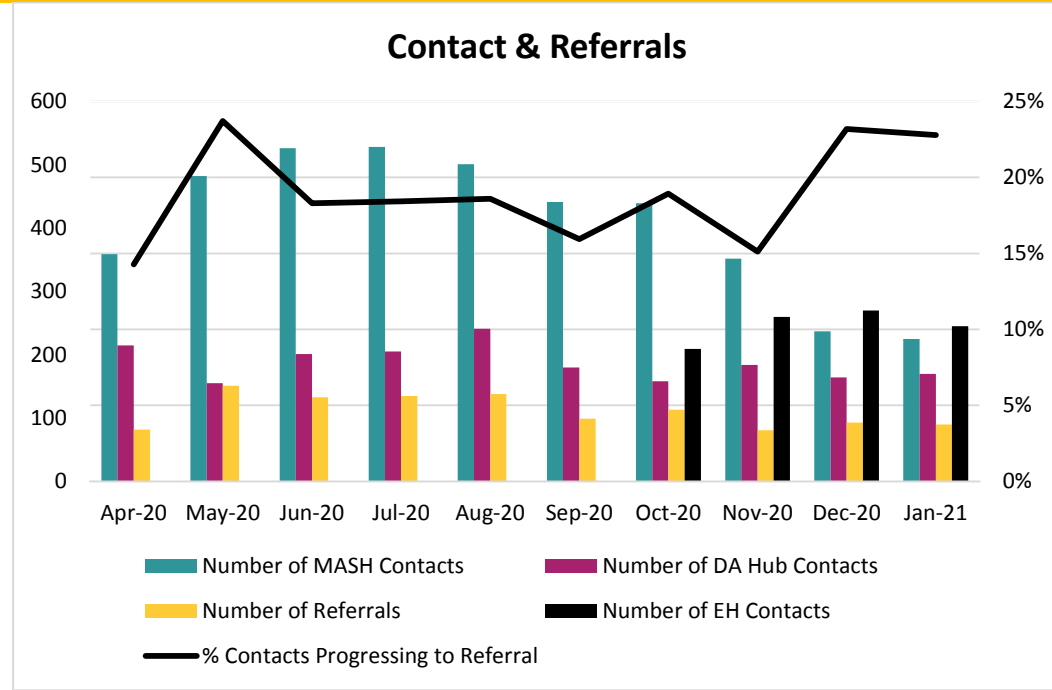


# Safeguarding and Family Support Scorecard January 2021

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<p>What is going well?</p>	<p>What are we worried about?</p>	<p>What are our top priority actions (no more than 5) for the month following the review of performance? Including doing more of what is making a difference for children and families.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 98% of contacts into MASH, 100% of contacts into the DA Hub and 99.6% of contacts into the Early Help Hub were managed in timescales.</li> <li>2. 93% of Child and Family Assessments were completed in timescales. Year to date figure is 89%; which is better than our comparator authorities.</li> <li>3. Worker Supervision at 96% for Operational Teams and 100% for Business Support.</li> <li>4. Caseloads have reached the lowest levels in 12 months at 13 cases per worker with 7% holding more than 20 cases.</li> <li>5. Percentage of permanent social workers has been consistently above 80% for eight months and was at 88% in January. Empty seats remain low at 5% for this month.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our year to date re-referral percentage remains high at 25%. However, the percentage has fallen for the fourth consecutive month to 18%</li> <li>2. So far this year, 25% of our children were not seen in the 3 day timescale in Child and Family Assessments.</li> <li>3. Section 47s % in timescales fell to 64% this month. The year to date figure is at 76%.</li> <li>4. So far this year, our Section 47s with an outcome of No Further Action is 45%.</li> <li>5. Case supervision this month is reported at 74%. However, the percentage of cases with a supervision in the previous 3 months increased to 86% on the supervision report dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-Referral rates. Understand if cases are stepped down too quickly and work across all services to ascertain the underlying causes for re-referrals and provide challenge where necessary. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>2. Assessments Child Seen in 3 days. We will continue to encourage social workers to input their day 3 visits in the Child and Family assessment as soon as these have been undertaken. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>3. NFA Cases. Consider all cases as they come over from MASH before recording them as NFA. Ensure that there is robust challenge of threshold decisions to reduce the number of cases that are NFA'd to build on positive progress made. <b>Lead: MASH and Assessment Team Managers</b></li> <li>4. Supervision. Continue to prioritise completing supervision with staff on a regular basis using a Signs of Safety approach ensuring that supervision is recorded at the time. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> <li>5. Continue to monitor our "bottom line" to ensure that case summaries are completed and updated in timescale. <b>Lead: All Team Managers</b></li> </ol>

## Referrals and Early Help



Source of Contacts and Referrals	Early Help Contacts	% of EH Contacts	MASH & DA Hub Contacts	% of MASH & DA Hub Contacts	Total Referrals	% of Referrals	% of Contacts Progressed to Referral*
Anonymous	2	1%	3	1%	1	1%	33%
Education Services	7	3%	4	1%	1	1%	25%
Health services - A&E (accident and	14	6%	3	1%	3	3%	100%
Health services - General Practitioner (GP)	3	1%	7	2%	3	3%	43%
Health services - Health Visitor	0	0%	5	1%	0	0%	0%
Health services - Other eg. hospice	0	0%	5	1%	5	6%	100%
Health services - Other primary health	19	8%	22	6%	11	12%	50%
Health Services - Other	16	7%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Health services - School Nurse	2	1%	4	1%	0	0%	0%
Individual - family member / relative /	12	5%	8	2%	0	0%	0%
Individual - self	5	2%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
LA Services - External/other LA	7	3%	3	1%	0	0%	0%
LA services - social care, for example, from another local authority's adults	60	24%	35	9%	23	26%	66%
LA Services - Other internal	1	0%	3	1%	1	1%	33%
Other - including children's centres, independent agency providers or	13	5%	9	2%	1	1%	11%
Other Legal Agency - incl. courts, probation, immigration, CAFCASS or	12	5%	7	2%	4	4%	57%
Police	68	28%	236	60%	25	28%	11%
Schools	4	2%	41	10%	12	13%	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>		<b>395</b>		<b>90</b>		<b>23%</b>

### Contacts and Referrals:

April-January Contact reporting has been adjusted to reflect the processes within the MASH Team. The 'Police Notification of Domestic Abuse' Contacts are screened by the Domestic Abuse Hub. In January, 225 Contacts came directly into MASH, 170 Contacts went to the Domestic Abuse Hub and 245 Contacts went to the Early Help Hub. In January, 23% of contacts progressed to referral. The YTD figure is 19%.

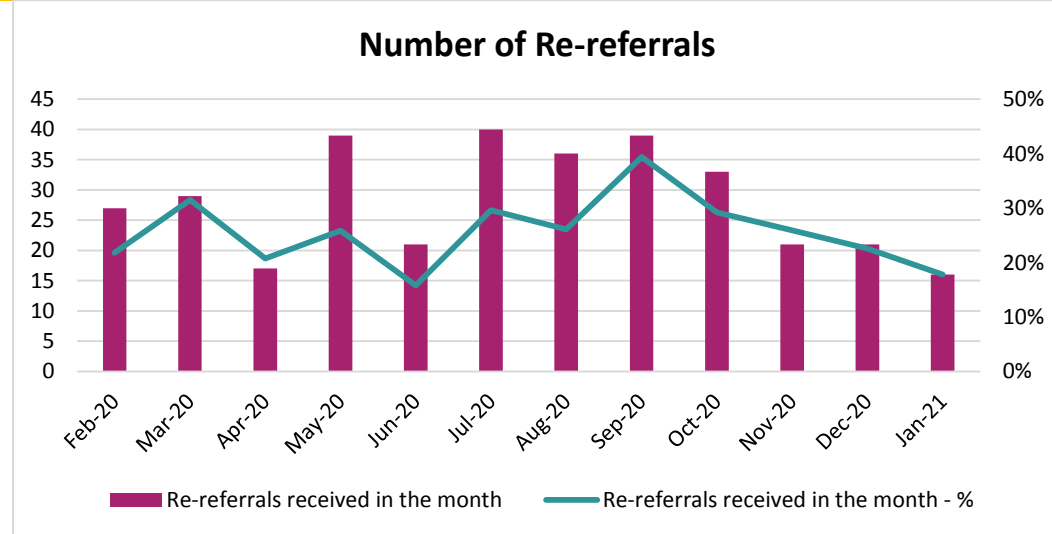
January 2020 YTD figure for contacts progressing was 22%.

**Contact & Referrals Management:** The above graph shows the percentage of MASH Contacts which have been managed in 24hrs, the percentage of Domestic Abuse Hub Contacts managed in 48hrs timescales and the percentage of Early Help Hub Contacts managed in 72hrs. The timeliness for January was 98% managed in 24hrs for the MASH Contacts, 100% managed in 48hrs for the DA Hub Contacts and 99.6% managed in 72hrs for Early Help Hub Contacts. From September, non-working days are no longer being included in calculating the timeliness of Contacts.

### Contact/Referral by agency:

As can be seen from this table, the majority of our activity into MASH and the DA Hub continues to be driven by the Police. In January, the Early Help Hub received the majority of contacts from the Police, Local Authority Services and Health.

\*Contacts into MASH that progressed includes those stepped up from Early Help Hub.



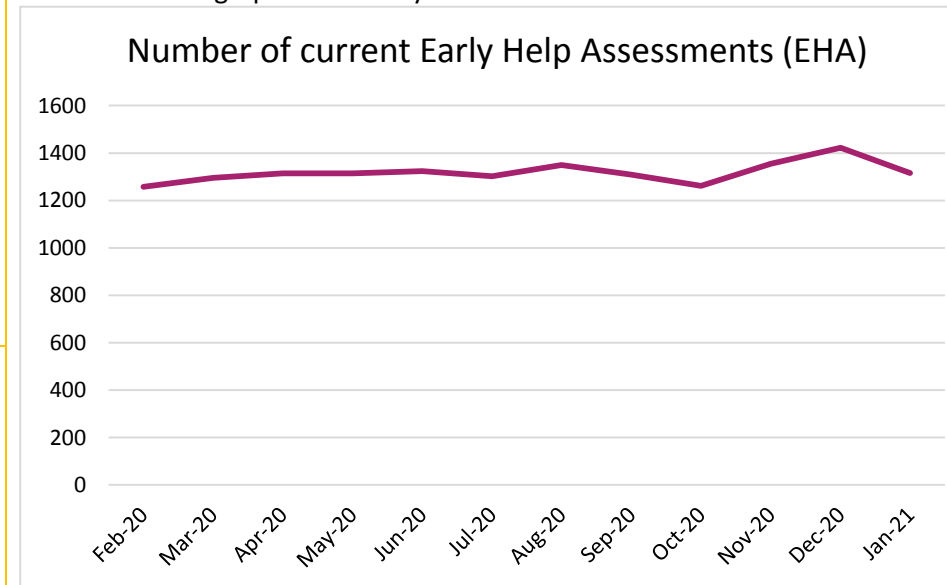
**Percentage of Re-referrals:** The proportion of re-referrals in January was 18%, which is a 5% point decrease from December. January 2020 YTD figure was 19%.

Re-referral % comparison							
Hfd Jan	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
18%	25%	21%	20%	22%	19%	19%	20%

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

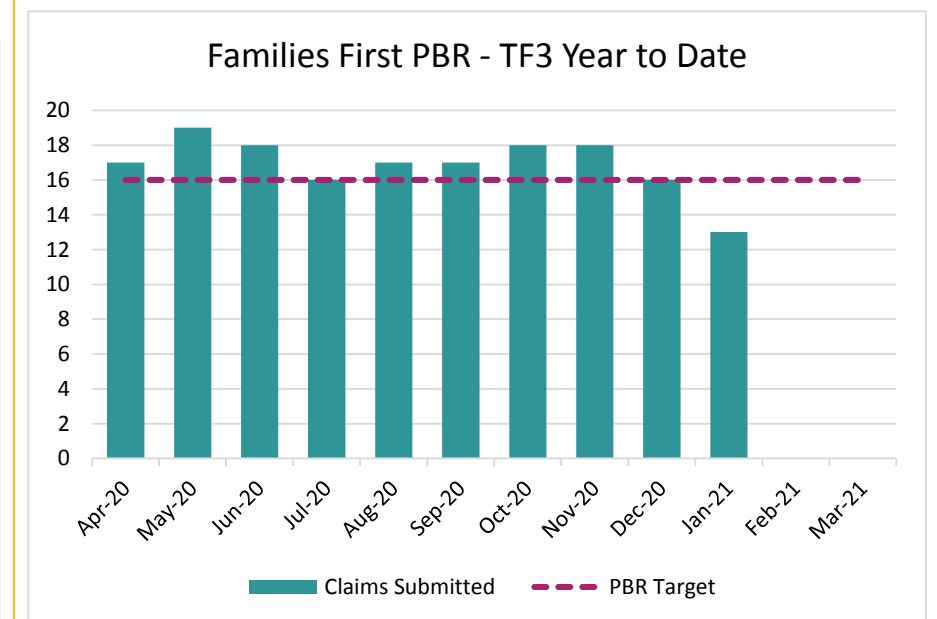
### Early Help Interventions

As can be seen from the graph below, the number of cases open to Early Help had stabilised. There was a slight increase between October and December. The numbers have fallen slightly in January but are still higher than the lowest point recorded in this graph in February 2020.



### Families First

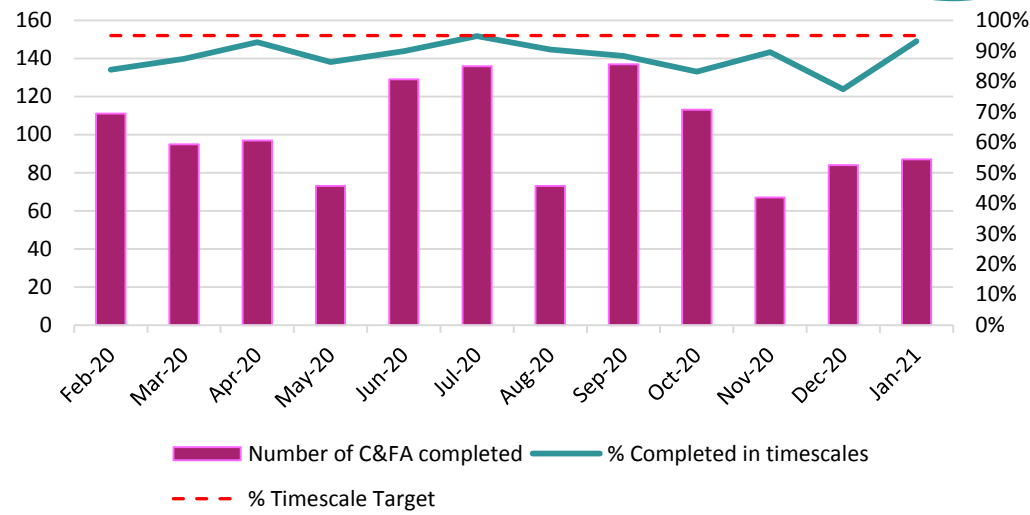
The TF Phase 2 programme ended at the end of March. The graph below shows the target for the new TF3 programme which began in April.



## Assessments

### Child & Family Assessments

81 out of 87 Assessments in time



Assessments	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Year to Date
Completed in time %	95%	90%	88%	83%	90%	77%	93%	89%
Child seen in 3 days%	82%	62%	79%	81%	66%	73%	77%	75%

January 2020 YTD figure for assessments completed in time was 78%.

Assessments in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Jan	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing *
93%	89%	83%	79%	84%	81%	84%	87%

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

**Outcomes of Child & Family Assessment:** Some referrals will have an outcome of a Strategy Meeting as well as an Assessment. The table below separates the Assessment outcomes by cases that had a Strategy Meeting as well as an Assessment (Strategy Meeting), there was one of these in January the rest were those that only had an Assessment (No-Strategy Meeting).

Referral Outcome	Assessment Outcome	Number and %* of total assessments
Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	0 (0%)
	Continue with current plan	0 (0%)
	Close Case	1 (1%)
No-Strategy Meeting	CIN Plan	2 (2%)
	Strategy Meeting	0 (0%)
	Continue with current plan	5 (6%)
	Close Case	72 (83%)
	Outcome not yet recorded	7 (8%)

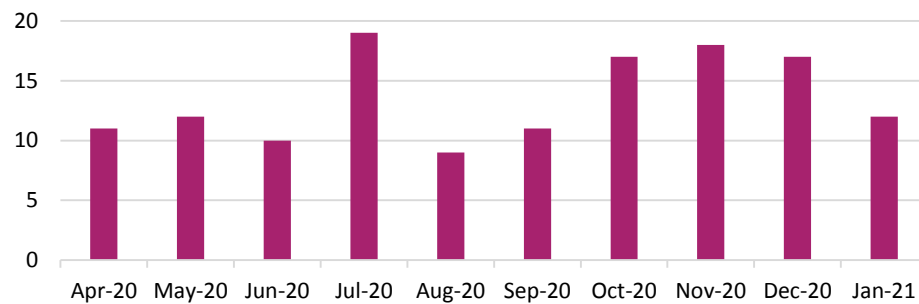
**Actions Resulting from Case Closure:** The following table shows what support was provided after the case was closed to Social Care in January.

Closed Case from:	Closed Case Next Actions	Number and %* of total closed cases
Assesment with a Strategy Meeting	Early Help	0 (0%)
	Family Support	0 (0%)
	Other Agencies	1 (1%)
	No Further Action	0 (0%)
Assessments with No-Strategy Meeting	Early Help	7 (10%)
	Family Support	0 (0%)
	Other Agencies	27 (37%)
	No Further Action	27 (37%)
	No Next Action Recorded	11 (15%)

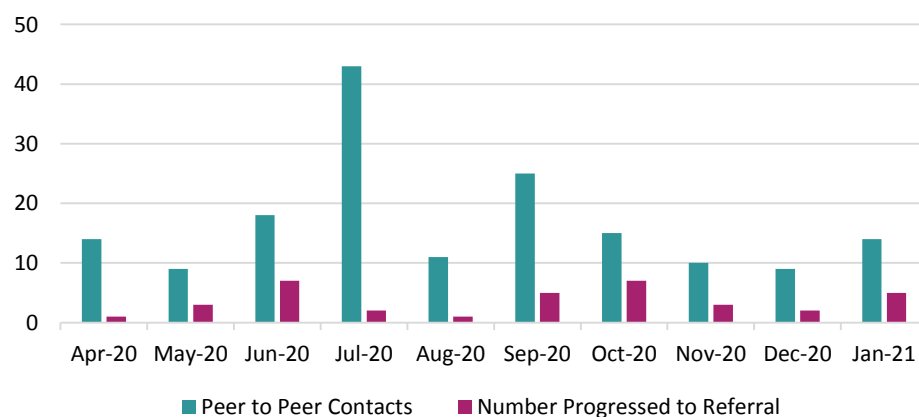
\*Due to rounding, the % may not add up to exactly 100%.

33 out of 43 in timescale

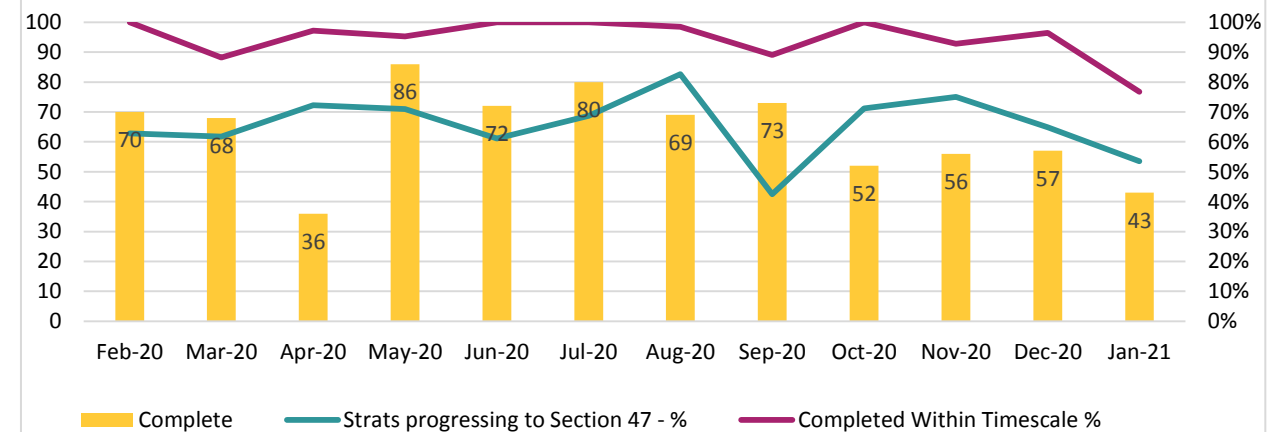
### Number of Child Exploitation Assessments per Month



### Peer to Peer Contacts and Referrals in Month



### Strategy discussions and % Progression to S47

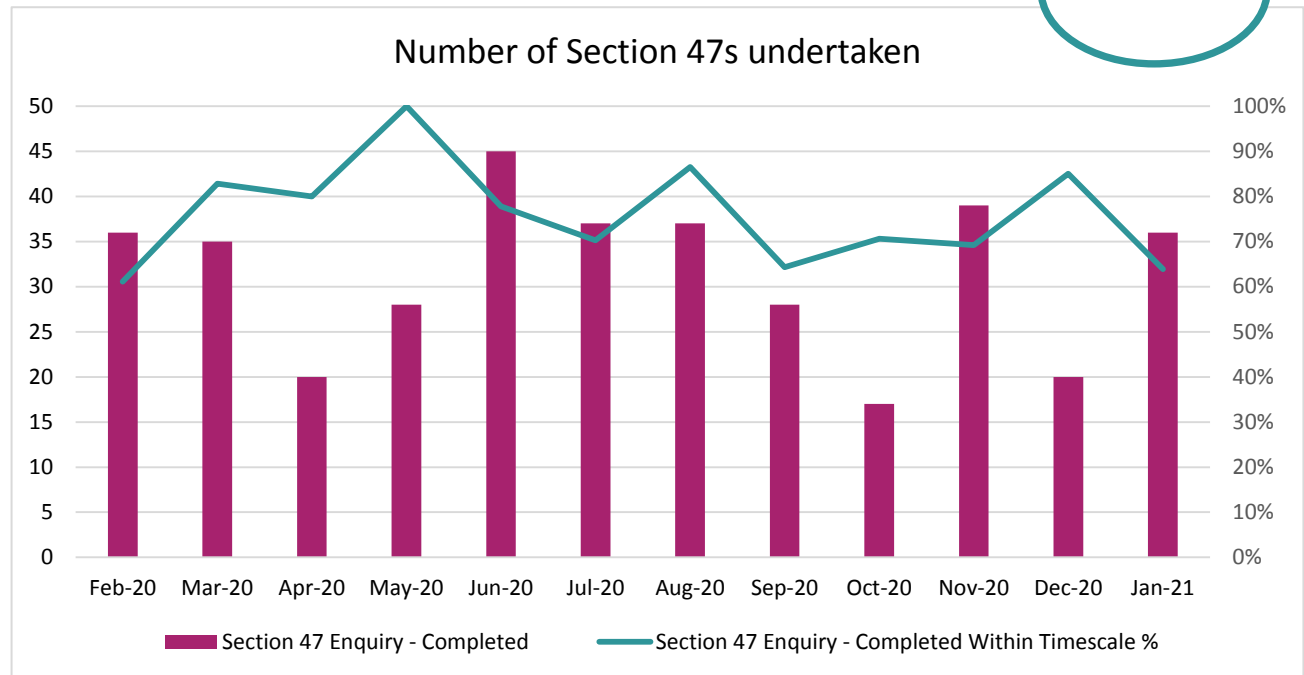


**Strategy Discussions:** During January, the number of Strategy Meetings decreased by 14 from 57 in December to 43 in January. The % completed in timescales was 77% for January. The progression of cases to Section 47 during the month decreased from 65% in December to 53% in January.

Strategy Discussions	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Year to Date
Completed in time %	100%	99%	89%	100%	93%	96%	77%	95%
Progression to S47	69%	83%	42%	71%	75%	65%	53%	66%

January 2020 YTD for Strategy Discussion in timescales was 97%.  
January 2020 YTD for Strategy Discussion progressing to S47 was 78%.

23 out of 36 S47s in time



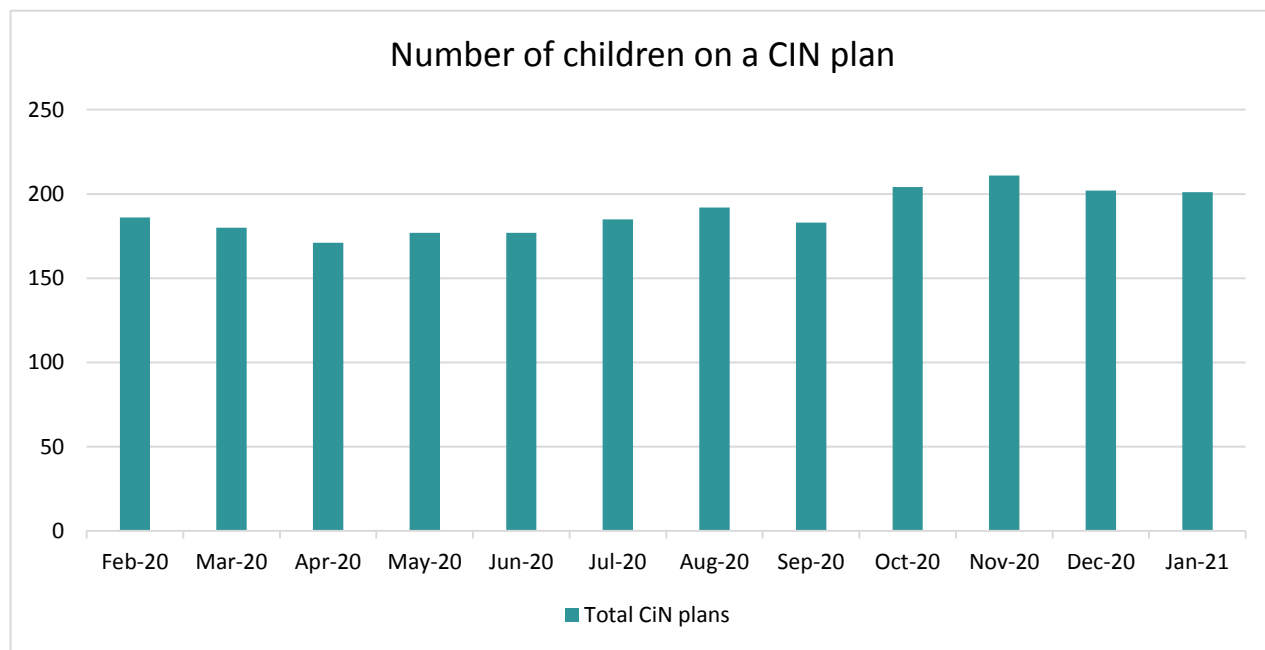
**Section 47s:**  
The number of Section 47s completed in January increased compared to December. 64% of Section 47s were completed in time in January which is a 21% point decrease from December at 85% in timescales.  
**Year to date figure for 2020/21 is 76% of Section 47 in timescale.**  
**2019/20 YTD: 66% Section 47 in timescale.**



**Section 47 Outcomes:**  
The graph above shows the outcome of the 36 Section 47s completed in the period. In January, 23 (64%) of Section 47s were NFA'd, 6 (17%) were progressed to ICPC, 6 (17%) went to Child in Need and 1 (3%) were already subject to a Child Protection Plan.  
*\*Due to rounding, the % do not add up to 100%*

	Herefordshire (@ Q2 2020/21)	West Midlands (2019/20)	England (2018/19)
<b>Section 47 Rate per 10,000</b>	137.4	176.7	168.3

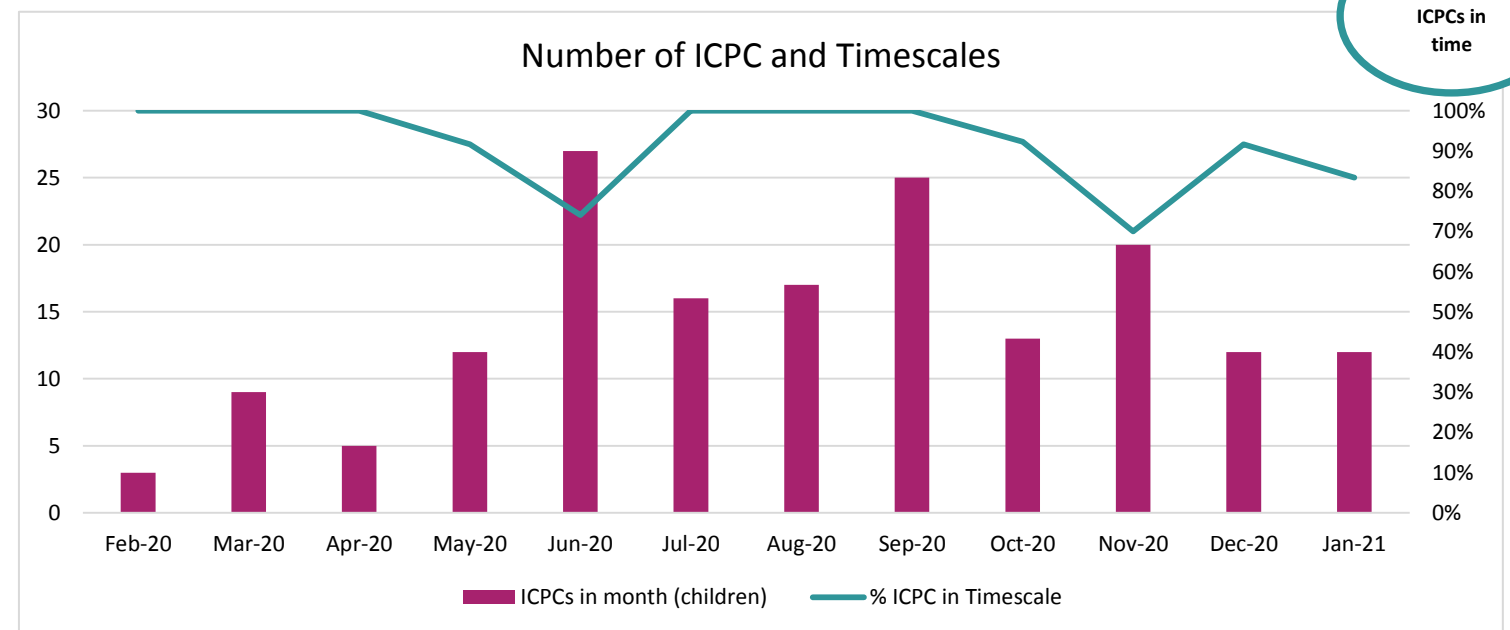
228



**Number of children on a CIN Plan:**

The graph above shows the number of children on a CIN Plan. There has been a slight decrease in the number of children on a CIN plan during the last month from 202 children in December to 201 children at 25<sup>th</sup> January.

10 out of 12 ICPCs in time



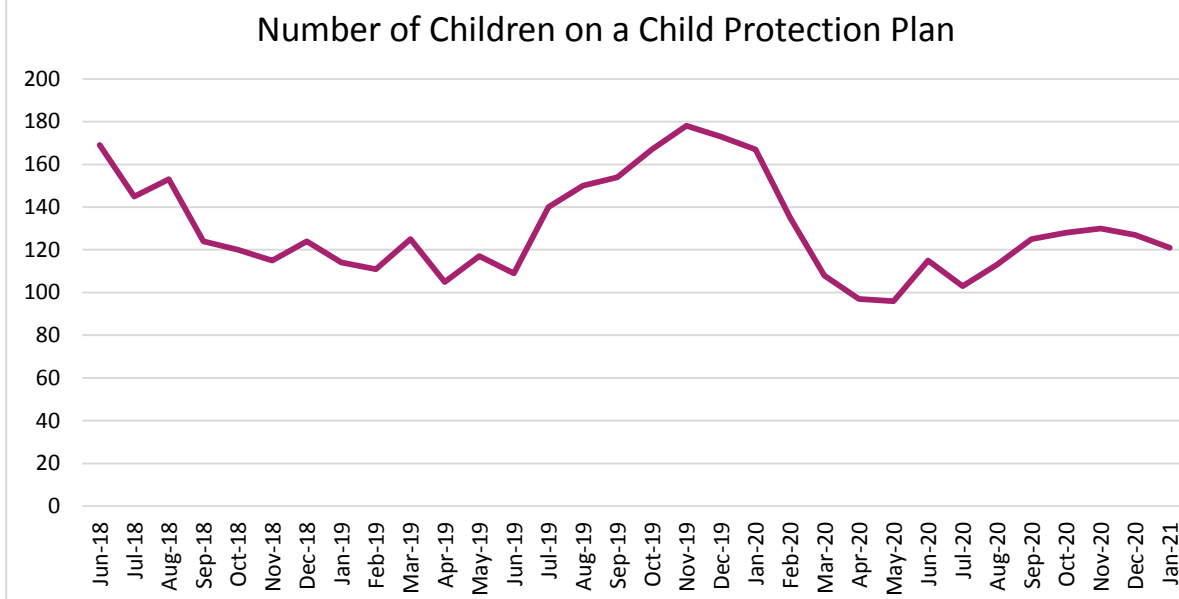
**Initial Child Protection Conferences:** In January, ICPC in timescales was 83%. 10 out of the 12 ICPCs this month were held in timescale. The year to date figure is 89% ICPC in timescale. The January 2020 year to date figure was 74%

ICPCs in timescale % comparison							
Hfd Jan	Hfd YTD	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
83%	89%	79%	75%	83%	79%	82%	84%

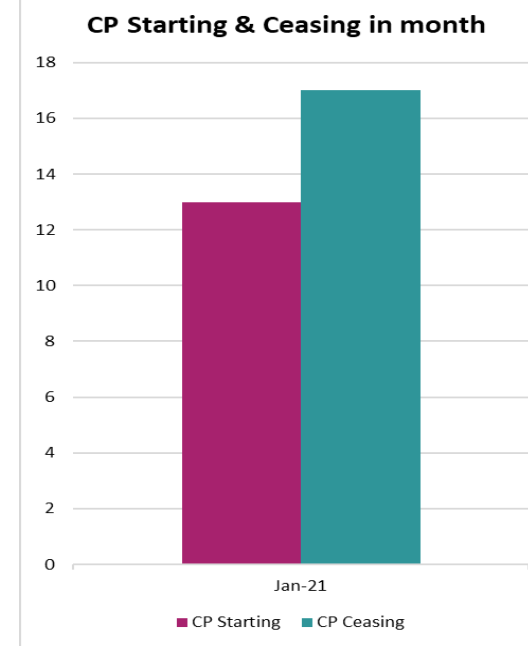
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



## Child Protection Plans



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



Current CP at Month End:

# 121

**Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans:**  
The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of January has decreased by 6 compared to the figure reported in December. In January 17 CP plans ceased. 11 CP plans ceased due to no longer meeting thresholds, 5 came into our care and 1 was recorded as 'other'.

CP Rate (per 10,000)						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
34	44	43	47	45	45	29

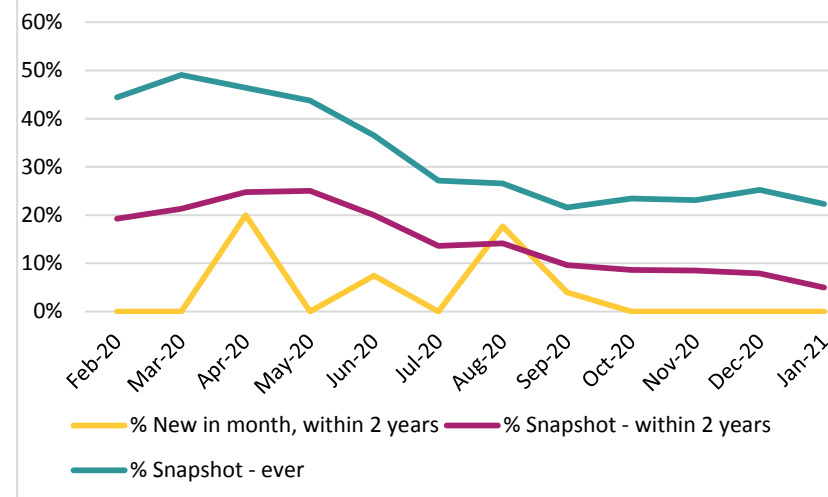
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).

### Categories of Need in Child Protection Plans

	June-20	July-20	Aug-20	Sept-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21
<b>Emotional</b>	60 (52%)	60 (58%)	68 (60%)	72 (58%)	71 (55%)	75 (58%)	76 (60%)	67 (55%)
<b>Neglect</b>	55 (48%)	43 (42%)	45 (40%)	42 (34%)	42 (33%)	40 (31%)	39 (31%)	41 (34%)
<b>Physical</b>	0	0	0	3 (2%)	5 (4%)	5 (4%)	5 (4%)	6 (5%)
<b>Sexual</b>	0	0	0	8 (6%)	10 (8%)	10 (8%)	7 (5%)	7 (6%)

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

### Second or Subsequent CP Plan

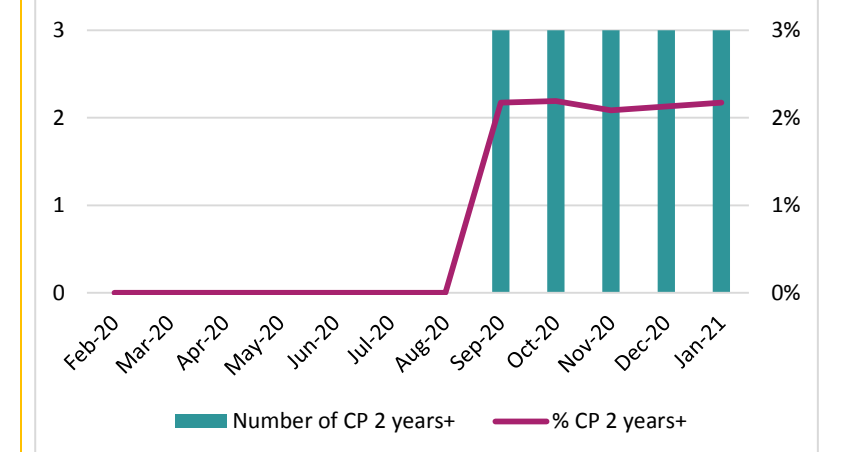


**— New in month, within 2 years:** New child protection plans where the child has previously had child protection plan in the last 2 years.  
**— Snapshot - within 2 years:** All children who are currently subject to a child protection plan who have returned to child protection, having been removed from a plan in the last 2 years.  
**— Snapshot - ever:** All children who are currently subject to a child protection plan who have returned to child protection, having previously been removed from a plan (no time limit) (CiN Census measure)

CP 2 <sup>nd</sup> and subsequent – within 2 years			
Hfd January	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*
5%	-	-	10.2%

\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (West Midlands).

### Number of children on CP plans for more than 2 years

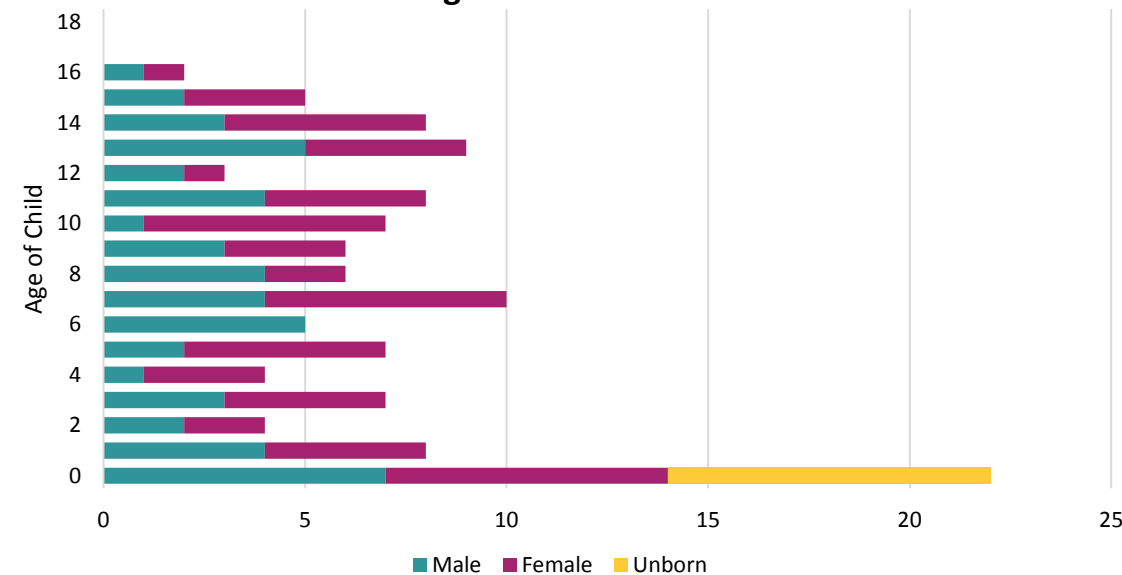


**Child Protection Plans open for 2 or more years:** From September - January, there was a family group of three children that had been on a plan for over 2 years.

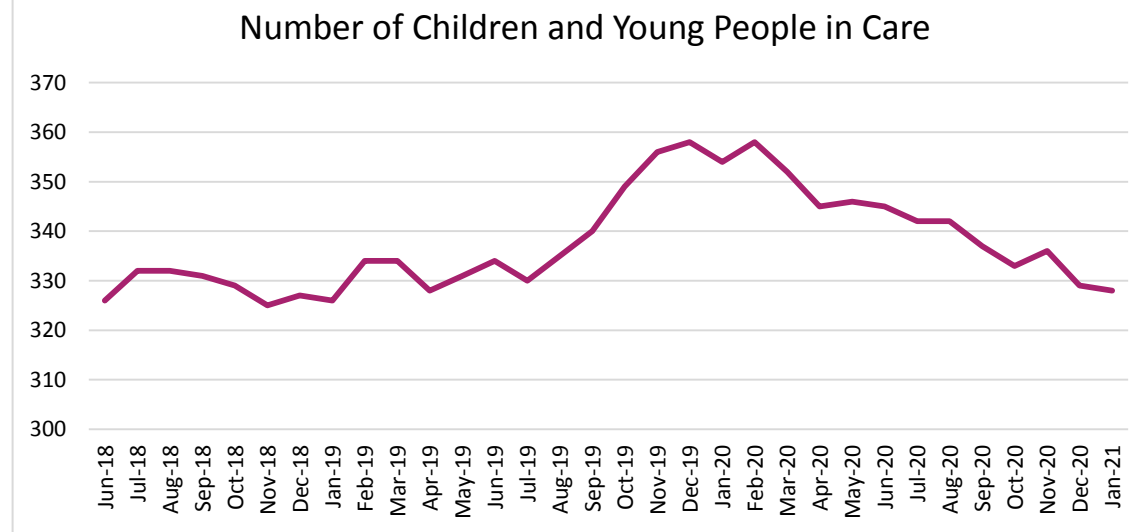
CP 2+ years (for those currently CP)				
Hfd January	Hfd YTD	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*
3	3	2	3	1

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

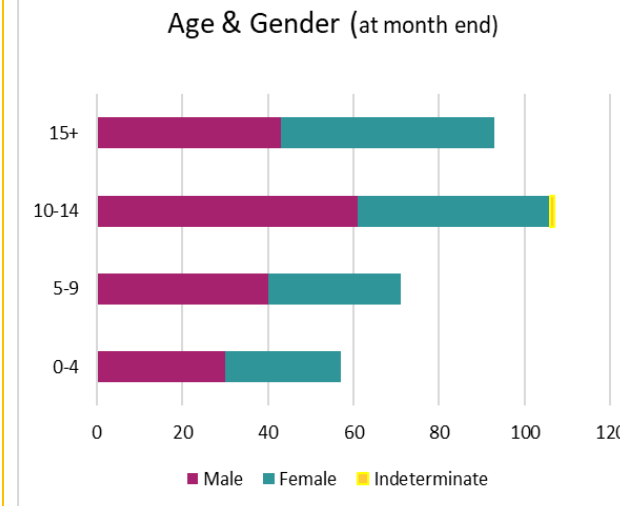
### Age of current CP



## Children and Young People in Care

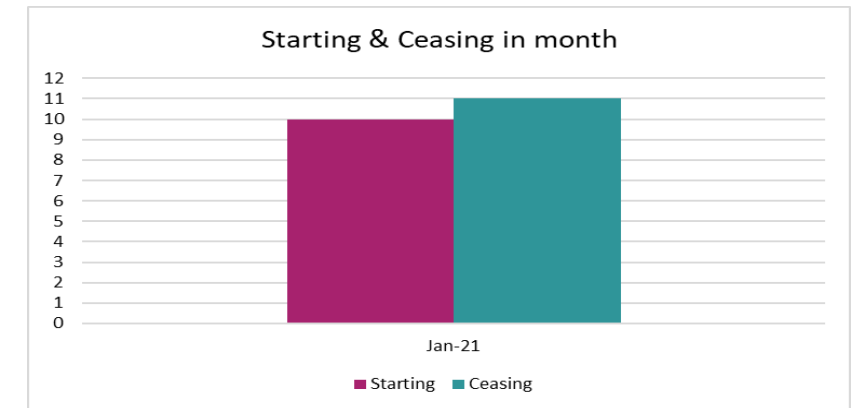


\*Note: This graph does not include retrospective action taken in Mosaic.



Number of Children and Young People in Care at Month End:

# 328



**New Children and Young People in Care in Period:** During January ten children came into care. Five children aged 0-4 years, three aged 5-9 years, one aged 10-14 years and one aged 15+.

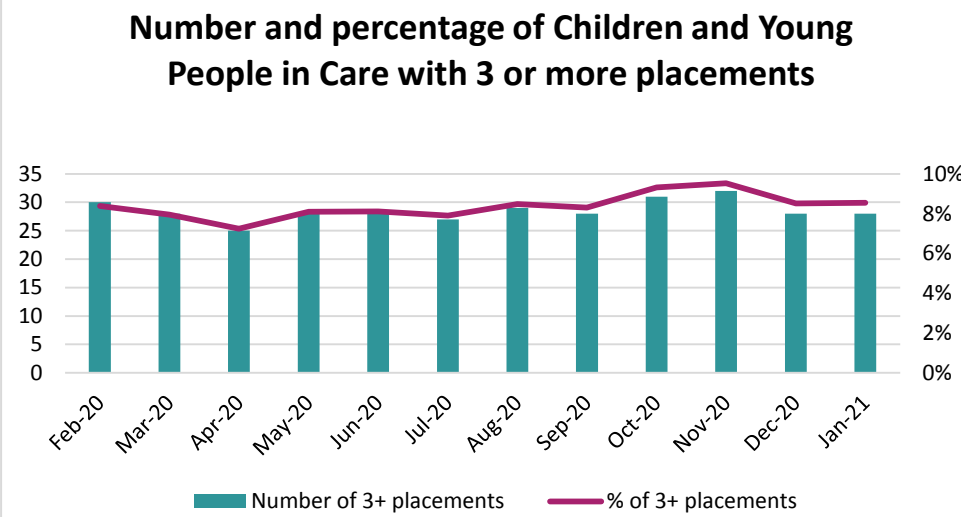
**Children and Young People in Care Cessations:** Eleven children ceased being in our care in January. Four had a Special Guardianship Order, four returned home, two turned 18 but remained with their carer and one had a Child Arrangement Order granted..

**Children and Young People in Care Numbers:** As at the end of January, the number of Children and Young People in Care was 328.

Children and Young People in Care Rate (per 10,000)						
Herefordshire January	England*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
91	65	54	82	55	66	48

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

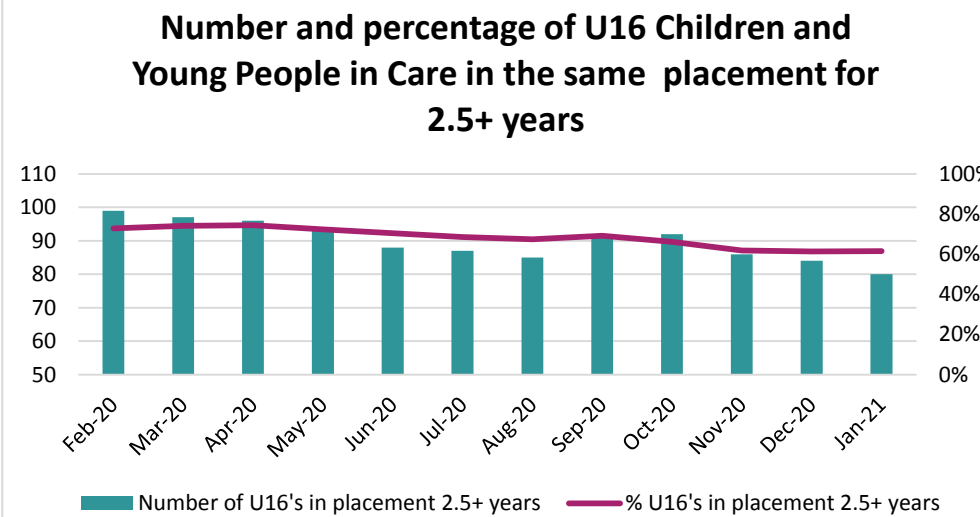
230



**Number of Children and Young People in Care 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. January has seen no change compared to December at 8.5%.

% of Children with 3 or more placements in last 12 months						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
8.5%	10%	11%	10%	10%	10%	12%

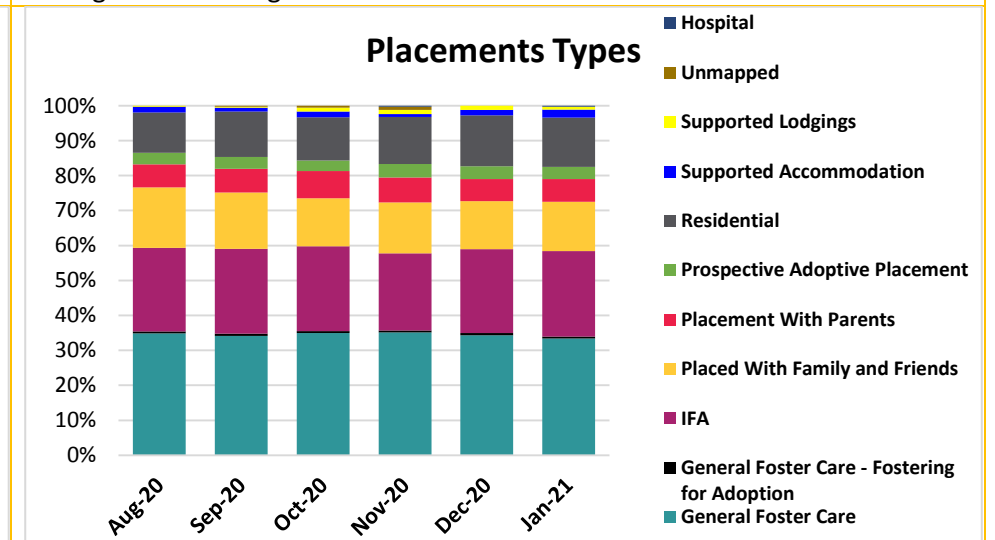
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



**Children in the same placement for 2.5+ years:** In January, the number of children who have remained in the same placement for 2.5+ years is 80 children, which is 62% of the under 16 Children and Young People in Care cohort.

% Looked After Children 2.5+ yrs in same placement						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
62%	69%	67%	68%	72%	69%	68%

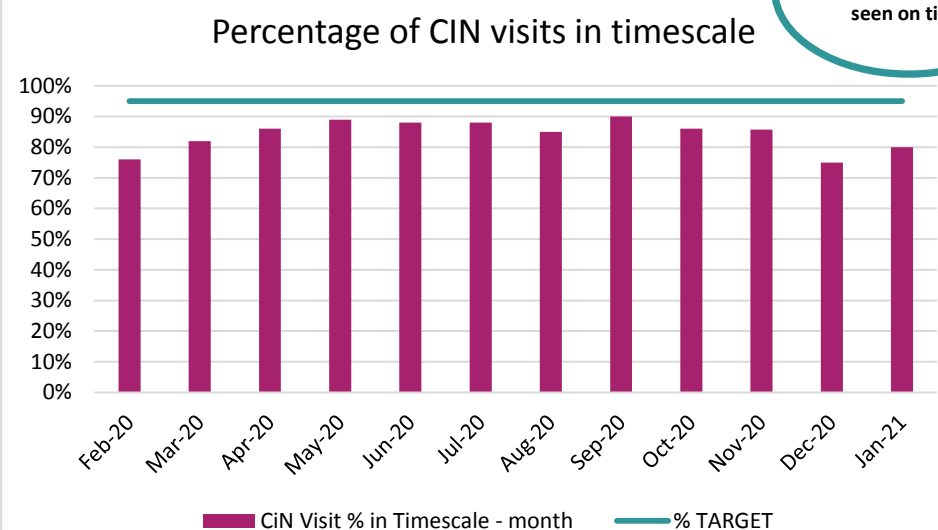
\*2018/19 figures used for comparison (England, statistical neighbours, West Midlands & OfSted).



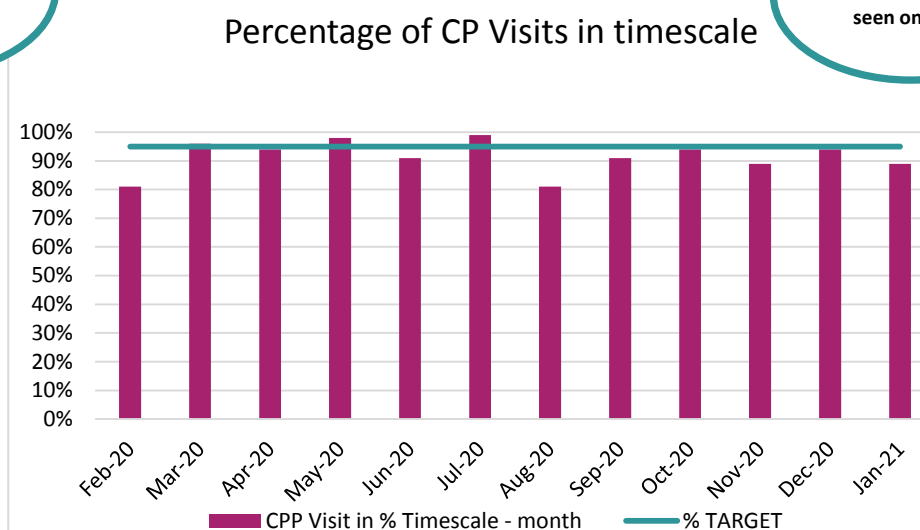
**Current Children and Young People in Care Placements:**

In January, 34% of Children and Young People in Care were placed with General Foster Carers and 24% were placed with Independent Foster Agencies. 21% of our Children and Young People in Care were placed with Parents or Family and Friends, 14% were in Residential and 4% were in adoption related placements. The remaining were placed in Supported Accommodation and Supported Lodgings.

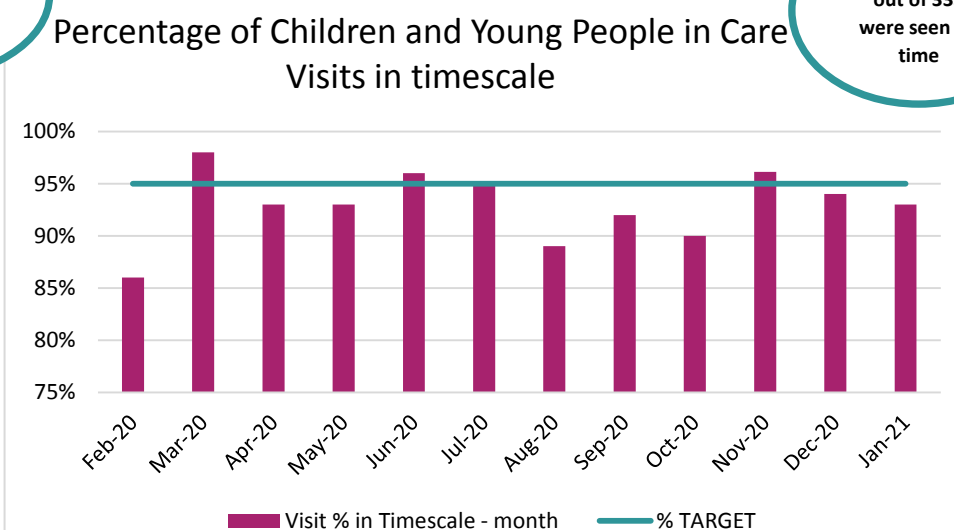
## Visits



106 children out of 133 were seen on time



102 children out of 115 were seen on time



311 children out of 333 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 January 80% of CIN visits were completed in timescale. This is an increase from last month.

Year to date is 85% and is below 95% target.

\*This data has come from 25<sup>th</sup> January 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.

The above chart shows CP visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of January, 89% of CP visits were completed in timescale. This is a decrease from last month which was 94%.

Year to date is 92% which is below the 95% target.

\*This data has come from 25<sup>th</sup> January 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.

The above chart shows Children and Young People in Care visits completed in timescale as at the last week of each month. At the end of January, 93% of Children and Young People in Care visits were completed in timescale. This is a small decrease from last month which was 94% and is just below the target. Year to date is 94% which is slightly below the 95% target.

\*This data has come from 25<sup>th</sup> January Weekly Visits Report. The number of allocated cases do not match the actual number of cases due to new Children and Young People in Care cases not requiring a visit in the month and ceased cases that have had a visit.

## Private Fostering

Number of Privately Fostered Children							
Month	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21
Number of children at the end of the month	1	1	2	2	1	4	2
Number of children started Private Fostering	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Number of children ceased Private Fostering	1	0	0	0	1	0	2

At the end of January, there were two children who were Privately Fostered.

Visits in Timescale							
Month	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21
Number of children with a visit in timescale	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
% of children with a visit in timescale	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	100%

100% of Private Fostering visits were in timescale during January.

## Care Leavers

	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total	Target	Progress Against Target
Cohort	25	39	29	93		
LA in Touch	20 (80%)	34 (87%)	25 (86%)	79 (85%)	92%	Slightly Below
In Suitable Accommodation	19 (76%)	34 (87%)	25 (86%)	78 (84%)	87%	Slightly Below
In Education, Employment or Training	15 (60%)	21 (54%)	18 (62%)	54 (58%)	57%	Exceeded

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

Last year comparison:

January 2020: 19-21 year olds in-touch: 82%; Suitable Accommodation: 76%; EET: 44%

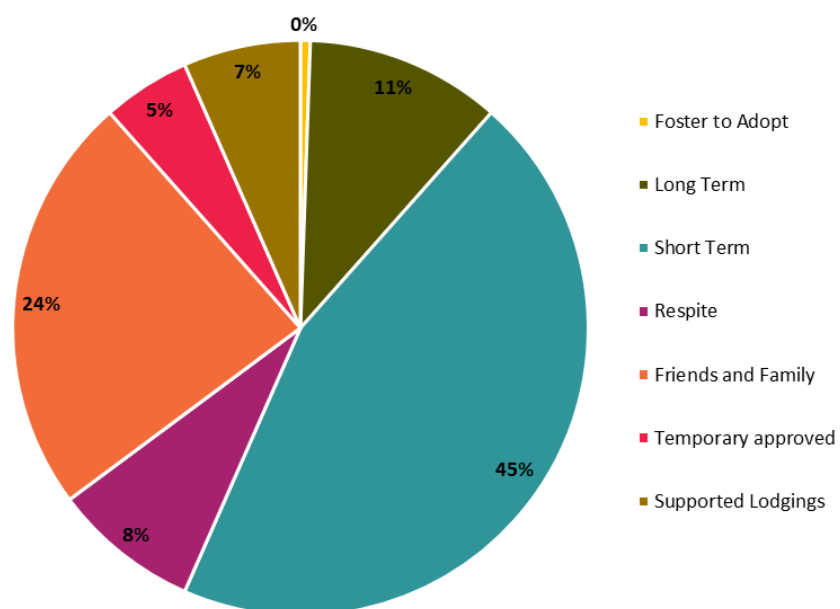
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Touch						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
85%	89%	91%	90%	92%	89%	87%
% Care Leavers aged 19-21 In Suitable Accommodation						
Hfdshire current	Eng*	Stat Neigh*	West Mids*	Good+ Stat Neigh*	OfSted Good*	OfSted Out'ing*
84%	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*
58%	52%	53%	51%	57%	55%	55%

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

## Fostering & Adoption

### Fostering

Number of Foster Carers by Type



	Number	% of Total Carers
<b>General Foster Carers</b>		
Short Term	82	26%
Long Term	20	29%
Respite	15	9%
Foster to Adopt	1	0%
<b>Total General Foster</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Friends and Family</b>		
Friends and Family	43	23%
Temporary Approved	9	6%
<b>Total Friends and Family</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Supported Lodgings</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7%</b>

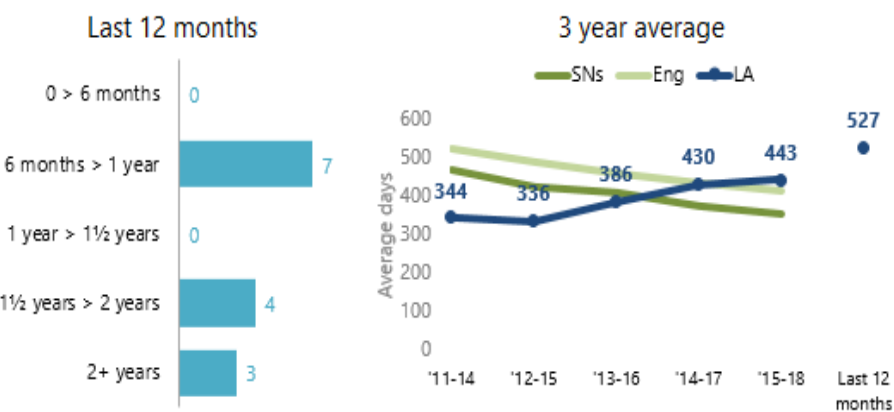
At the end of January there were 118 General Foster Carers which include Long Term, Short Term, Respite and Foster to Adopt Carers. There were 52 Family and Friends Carers which include Family and Friends and Temporary Approved Family and Friends. There was 12 Supported Lodgings providers.

There is still a small amount of work required to ensure that Staying Put and Short Breaks Carers are accurately captured. Trend data will be included in this report as soon as it is available.

### Adoption

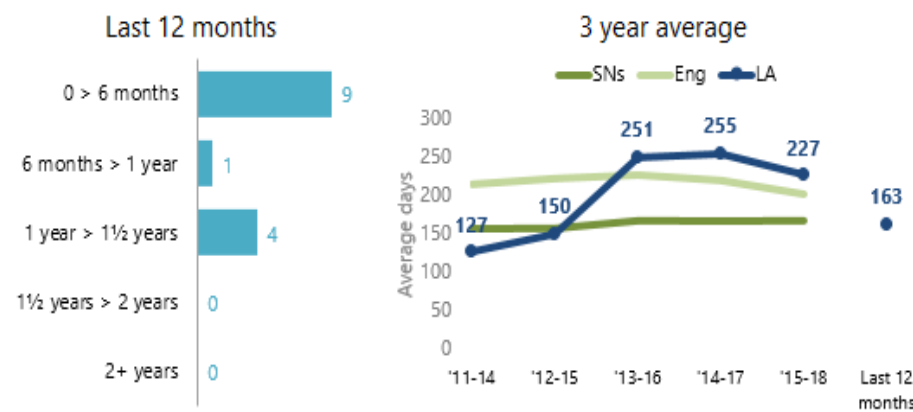
(A10) Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children

**527 days** Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family for adopted children (adjusted for foster carer adoptions)  
14 children

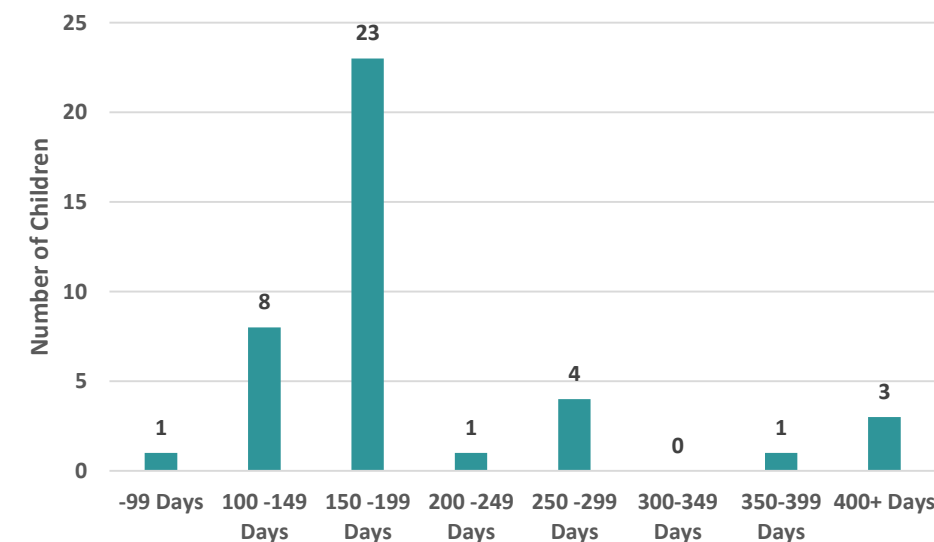


(A2) Time between placement order and deciding on a match

**163 days** The average number of days from the date of the placement order to the date the child was matched to prospective adopters  
14 children



A20 - Days between entering Care and Placement Order



Herefordshire has seen an increase in the average number of days it has taken between the date the child entered care and the date of the adoption order. The number of days for seven of the children in the cohort is in line with the benchmark performance. However the number of days for three of the children has increased the overall average.

In the last 12 months, Herefordshire has seen a decrease in the time taken between a placement order and when the child was matched to prospective adopters.

Over the last 12 months, the average days from a child being placed in our care to having a placement order granted was 220 days. 78% of our children had less than 200 days between being placed in our care and having a placement order granted. Comparator and trend data will be included in February's report.

## Supervisions

Case Supervision												
71% of Child in Need Plan cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				75% of Child Protection cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				75% of Children and Young People in Care cases have supervisions within the last 3 months.				
	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Over 3 Months to 6 Months	Over 6 Months	No Complete Supervision Step - New in last 30 days	No Complete Supervision Step	Total	Within 1 Month	Over 1 to 2 Months	Over 2 to 3 Months	Within 3 Months
Child in Need	36	61	45	45	1	10	3	201	18%	30%	22%	71%
Child in Care	59	133	55	73	5		3	328	18%	41%	17%	75%
CLA & CPP	1		4					5	20%	0%	80%	100%
Child Protection	10	50	28	27		1	1	117	9%	43%	24%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>74%</b>

Case Supervisions @ 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021: 74% of cases have a supervision within the last 3 months.

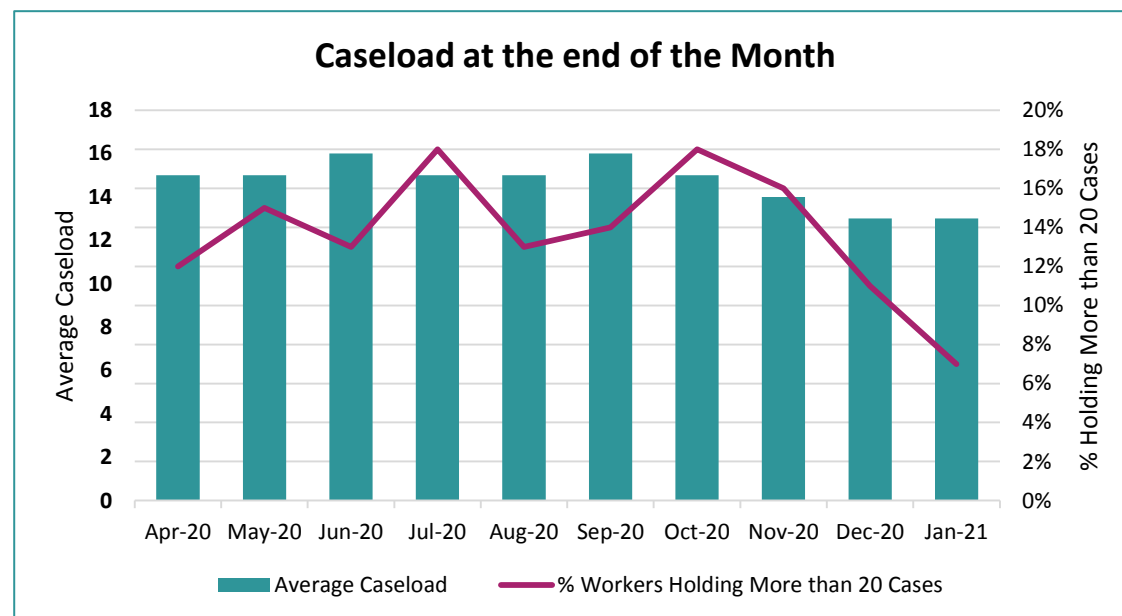
Last year comparison @ 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020: 80% of cases had a supervision within the previous 3 months.

Worker Supervision								
	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Direction of Performance
Operational Teams	89%	77%	74%	85%	78%	76%	96%	↑
Business Support	87%	74%	75%	98%	81%	98%	100%	↑

Last year comparison @ 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020

- 81% Operational Teams had a worker supervision in the month
- 96% Business Support had a worker supervision in the month

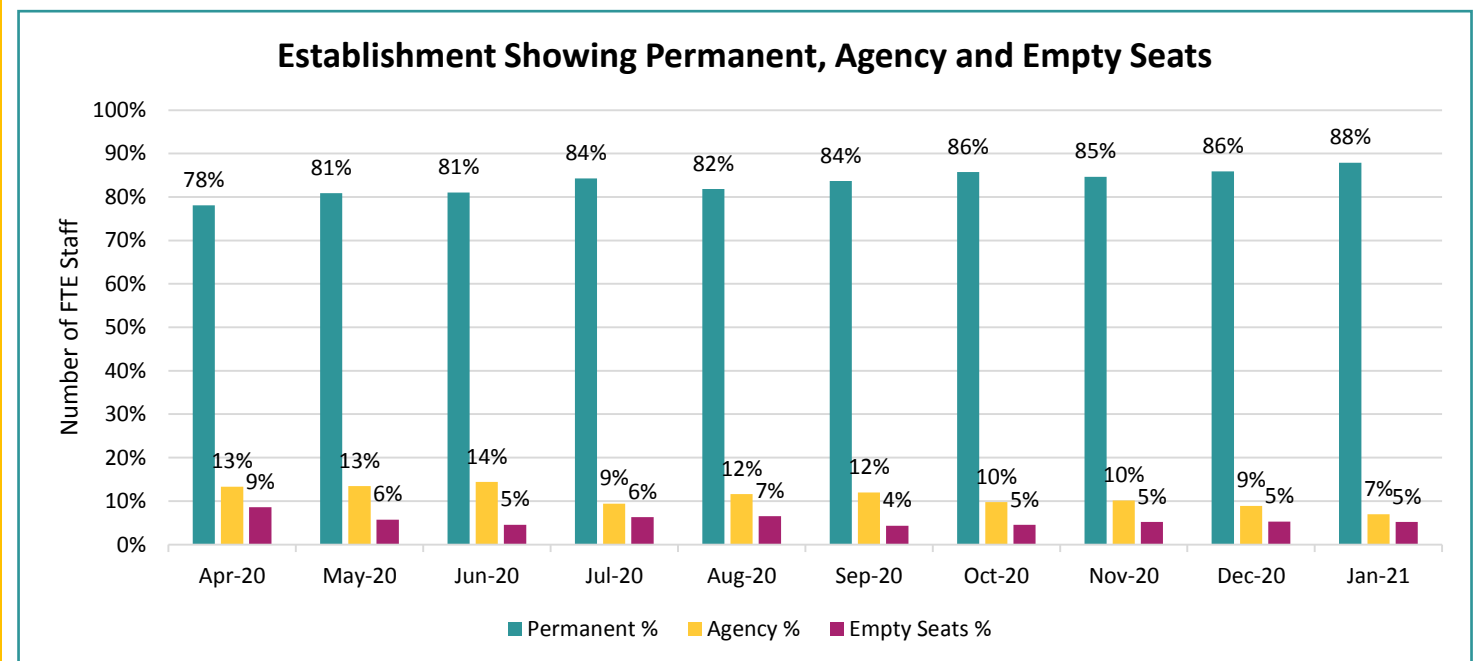
## Caseload



Caseloads have remained consistent over the last 6 months and for January were at an average of 13 cases per worker with 7% of workers holding more than 20 cases.

Last year comparison: At the end of January 2020 the average case load across the service was 22 with 37% holding more than 20 cases.

## Vacancies



The % of social workers employed on a permanent basis has seen some consistency in the last 6 months and is at 88% this month. Over the same period, we have seen a small fluctuation in the employment of agency workers with this month at 7%, which is 2% point lower than last month. Empty seats percentage is the same as last month at 5%.



## Audits

In January, 17 collaborative audits were completed.

Audit themes:

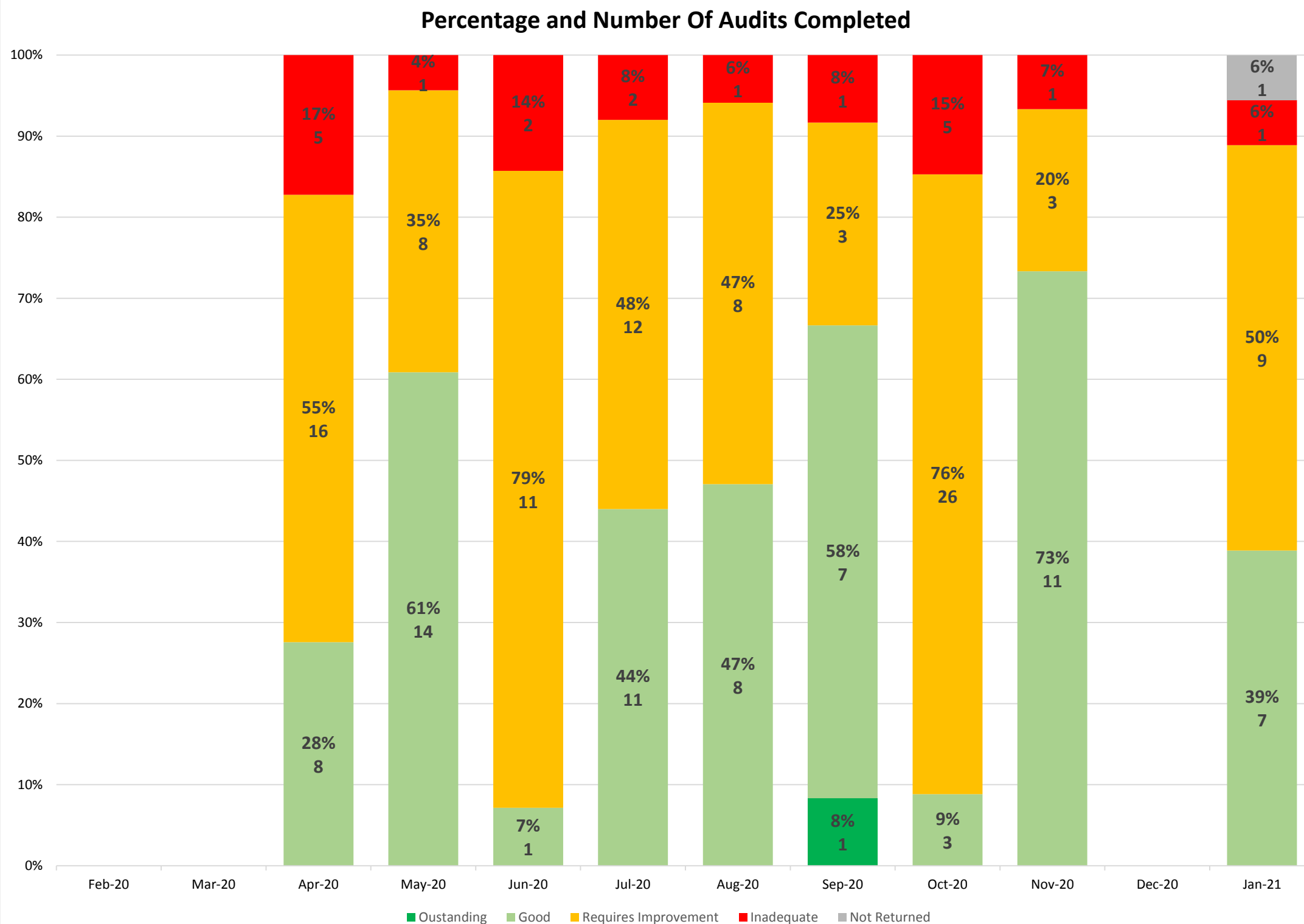
- Pre-birth assessments – Assessment Service
- Pre-birth assessments – CP Court Service
- Preparing for independence – 16+ Service

Outcomes\*:

- Good (7 audits, 39%)
- Requires Improvement (9 audits, 50%)
- Inadequate (1 audit, 6%)
- Not Returned (1 audit, 6%)

Comparison to Last Year			
Year to Date	2019/2020	2020/2021	Direction of Performance
Outstanding	0%	1%	↑
Good	23%	38%	↑
Requires Improvement	42%	52%	↑
Inadequate	33%	10%	↓
Not Returned	1%	1%	↔

- Due to rounding not all percentages add up to 100%.





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children and young people scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 23 March 2021</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Work programme 2021 - 2022</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Democratic Services Officer</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

This is not an executive decision

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose and summary

To agree: the attached work programme and meeting dates for 2021/22; and the scoping document for the paediatric therapies task and finish group. To note the recommendations tracker.

## Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- (a) **Reviews and agrees the 2021/22 work programme and meeting dates at appendix 1; discusses any additional items of business or topics for inclusion in the work programme;**
- (b) **approves the scoping document (appendix 2) for the paediatric therapies task and finish group, its membership (including any co-optees) and the appointment of a chairperson; and**
- (c) **notes the recommendation tracker in appendix 3.**

## Alternative options

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

## Key considerations

### Work Programme

2. The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in. Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the chairperson, vice chairperson and the statutory scrutiny officer. The proposed work programme for 2021-2022 is attached at appendix 1.

### Constitutional Matters

#### Task and Finish Groups

3. 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.
4. The scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken by a task and finish group, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. The committee will appoint the chairperson of a task and finish group.
5. The committee is asked to determine matters relating to the convening of a task and finish group including the scope of the review to be undertaken, the chairperson, membership, timeframe, desired outcomes, what will not be included in the review and whether to co-opt any non-voting members to the group. Such co-optees could consist of individuals with valuable skills and experience that would assist a task and finish group to undertake a review (see below).
6. During its work programming session on 20 November 2020 the convening of a paediatric therapies task and finish group was proposed. The draft scoping document for the task and finish group is attached, as appendix 2, for the committee to consider and approve. The committee is also asked to agree the membership of the task and finish group and appoint a chairperson.

#### Co-option

7. 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.

8. The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

#### **Tracking of resolutions made by the committee which require a response or action**

9. A schedule of recommendations made by the committee which require a response or action is appended to this report as appendix 3.

#### **Forward plan**

10. The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming decisions of the children and families directorate are listed below:

<b>Decision and purpose</b>	<b>Date of decision and decision maker</b>
<p><b>Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 For Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SEND</b></p> <p>To approve the Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy for specialist settings for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 2021-2030.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to ensure that there is high quality sustainable specialist educational accommodation for children and young people with SEND in Herefordshire.</p>	22 April 2021 by Cabinet
<p><b>High Needs Budget 2021/22</b></p> <p>To approve the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs budget for 2021/22 as recommended by Schools Forum</p>	31 March 2021 by Cabinet member children and families

#### **Suggestions for scrutiny from members of the public**

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

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your\\_council/61/get\\_involved/4](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved/4),

#### **Community impact**

12. 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

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

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

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

15. 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.
16. The councillors' allowance scheme contains provision for co-opted and other non-elected members to claim travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances on the same basis as members of the council. If the committee agrees that co-optees should be included in an inquiry they will be entitled to claim allowances.

## Legal implications

17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.

21. 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

22.

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

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

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Work Programme 2021/22.  
 Appendix 2 – Scoping document paediatric therapies task and finish group.  
 Appendix 3 – Recommendation tracker.

## Background papers

None identified.



## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

23 March 2021

### Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting date: 1 June 2021 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 24 May	
Item	Description	Report Author	Form of Scrutiny*
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan. (Quarter 4)	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire. Child Exploitation summit, to include modern day slavery	To provide detail on the work of the prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire. To include detail of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire. To facilitate the child exploitation summit to include a focus on modern day slavery.	Liz Elgar	Performance Review
Children's Centre T&F scope	To consider a scoping document for a task and finish group concerning children's centres.	Matthew Evans	Policy review and development
Meeting date: 27 July 2021 – 10.15 p.m.		Despatch: 19 July	
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan. (Quarter 1)	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Youth Justice Plan	To endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 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 2019/20.		Pre-decision call-in of Policy Framework item

Corporate Parenting Strategy – annual update / Leaving care and preparing for adulthood	To consider the annual update to the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023.  To receive details of what services exist to prepare care leavers and unaccompanied child asylum seekers for adulthood.	Andy Gill/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: 14 September 2021 – <b>10.15 a.m.</b>		Despatch: 6 September	
Impact of pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers and mental health	To provide a report concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how the council is intending to address the impact on school and care leavers of the potential economic downturn and reduced employment opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and</li> <li>- actions to address mental health problems arising from the pandemic and including a focus on pastoral support in schools and potential forms of funding from government.</li> </ul>	Ceri Morgan	Policy review and development / Performance review
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) annual report and LADO and IRO annual reports	To receive and scrutinise the HSCP annual reports and IRO and LADO annual reports.	Liz Elgar/Andy Gill	Performance Review
Meeting date: 23 November 2021 – <b>10.15 a.m.</b>		Despatch: 15 November	
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan (Quarter 2)	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Public Health – Dental Health and Childhood Obesity	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.		Performance Review

	To provide an update on work of the council to address childhood obesity  To provide detail regarding the Public Health England better start in life (BSIL) Programme.		
Meeting date: 11 January 2022 – <b>10.15 a.m.</b>		Despatch: 3 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: 22 March 2022 – <b>10.15 am.</b>		Despatch: 14 March	
Review of performance and progress against the Safeguarding and Family Support improvement plan (Quarter 3)	To review progress against the improvement plan produced in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection judgement of June 2018 and the subsequent Safeguarding and Family Support division improvement plan.	Andy Gill	Performance Review
Work programme 2022/23	To agree the work programme and meeting dates for the 2021/22 administrative year.	Matt Evans	

**Business to allocate**– Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) – task and finish group – **Proposed****Briefing Notes:**

Briefing note concerning the NEETs project			Briefing note – September 2021
Outcome of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans			Briefing note – Summer 2021
Elective Home Education and current trends			Briefing note – November 2021

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





## Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

### Paediatric Therapies Task and Finish Group – Scoping Document

Title of review	Paediatric Therapies Task and Finish Group
Scope	
Reason for review	<p>To consider how the coronavirus has impacted on the provision of paediatric therapies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)</li> <li>• Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</li> <li>• Children’s Physiotherapy</li> <li>• Children’s Occupational Therapy</li> </ul>
Links to the county plan	<p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire county plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together</li> </ul>
Summary of the review and terms of reference	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the performance of paediatric therapies and any delays between referral to treatment in paediatric therapies.</li> <li>• To consider the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on paediatric therapies and how working practices have adapted.</li> </ul>
	<p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The task and finish group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive performance data (prior to the pandemic and since the outbreak) including waiting times for assessment and referral to treatment. To consider in the context of national and regional statistics.</li> <li>• Receive detail of the range of therapy services available to children and young people in Herefordshire.</li> <li>• Receive and consider referral pathways and clinical criteria to access the services; including urgent and routine referrals.</li> <li>• Receive an assessment of the impact of health needs, such as SALT, on childhood development, e.g. social inclusion and friendships, engagement in education.</li> <li>• Receive detail of the group of children and young people receiving therapeutic services, e.g. CYP with SEND, CYP with cancer, CYP with complex health needs, CYP with eating disorders and CYP with gender dysphoria</li> <li>• To receive and consider feedback concerning services from CYP, families, staff and stakeholders. To determine any themes or predominant issues and where improvement could be realised.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To receive detail of service resources, current workforce and clinicians' caseloads.</li> <li>• To receive details of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on therapeutic services and adaptations that have been necessary to respond to demand during the periods of lockdown/social distancing.</li> <li>• To develop an understanding of what are the main issues or themes that lead to a referral to therapeutic services from the experience of the clinical staff and why – are there health inequalities?</li> </ul> <p>Membership (to be determined):</p>
What will NOT be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The examination of any individual cases. However anonymised case studies might assist the Group in completing the review.</li> </ul>
Potential outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the current performance of paediatric therapies; and</li> <li>• An understanding of the impact of the coronavirus on the provision of paediatric therapies.</li> </ul>
Key Questions	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance data (prior to the pandemic and since the outbreak) including waiting times for assessment and referral to treatment and how does this compare with national and regional statistics?</li> <li>• What are the referral pathways and clinical criteria to access services?</li> <li>• Receive an assessment of the impact of health needs, such as SALT, on childhood development, e.g. social inclusion and friendships, engagement in education.</li> <li>• What groups of children and young people receive therapeutic services, e.g. CYP with SEND, CYP with cancer, CYP with complex health needs, CYP with eating disorders and CYP with gender dysphoria?</li> <li>• What feedback exists concerning the experience of CYP, families, staff and stakeholders of therapeutic services?</li> <li>• What information can be presented of service resources, current workforce and clinicians' caseloads.</li> <li>• What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on therapeutic services and what adaptations have been necessary during the periods of lockdown/social distancing.</li> <li>• To develop an understanding of what are the main issues or themes that lead to a referral to therapeutic services from the experience of the clinical staff and why – are there health inequalities?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet member children and families

Key stakeholders / Consultees	Internal – Children and Families Directorate External – Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group – Wye Valley Trust
Potential witnesses	Representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)</li> <li>• Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</li> <li>• Physiotherapy</li> <li>• Occupational Therapy</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Families using paediatric therapy services</li> <li>• Primary school teachers</li> </ul>
Research Required	•
Potential Visits	
Publicity Requirements	Following the conclusion of the task and finish group, to 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 – 5 March 2021
Meeting One	
Meeting Two	
Meeting Three	
Present final report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	

Group Members	
Chair	
Support Members	
Co-optees	<i>Tbc</i>
Support Officers	M Evans



**Schedule of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee resolutions requiring a response or action**

Meeting	item	Recommendations	Action	Status
28 July 2020	Schools update	<p>RESOLVED – That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee recommends that a further survey is undertaken concerning children’s mental health and schooling arrangements during the pandemic;</li> <li>• A briefing note is circulated providing details of the number of private nurseries that have opened in September 2020 and stayed open in October and November;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the national catch-up programme;</li> <li>• The work on children’s mental health is prioritised by the committee and includes a review of school pastoral support and a mental health pathway for looked after children;</li> <li>• Further detailed examination of the outcomes of the survey is undertaken to determine how the provision and effectiveness of mental health services were impacted during the lockdown;</li> <li>• An update is provided regarding the attendance rates after the return to school in September.</li> </ul>	An update briefing on the recommendations relating to the schools update will be circulated.	

<p>19 January 2021</p>	<p>Provision of children centre service in Bromyard area: pre-decision scrutiny</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That the committee:</p> <p>1) Has significant concerns about the timing of the proposed decision during the current pandemic and the implications for services users. The committee recommends deferral of the decision and extension of the current contract up to 12 months to enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive consultation with the local community, service users and voluntary sector organisations;</li> <li>• Engagement with the HOPE Family Centre to ensure that the Council has necessary evidence to conduct a full and detailed evaluation of the service provided by the HOPE Family Centre and how it compares to the in-house service;</li> <li>• Greater exploration of alternative options including a potential tendering exercise for a commissioned service;</li> <li>• Work to ascertain what staffing arrangements would be put in place to ensure existing HOPE Family Centre staff have a greater degree of understanding about their future roles within the service; and</li> <li>• The committee to undertake a detailed scrutiny exercise on the</li> </ul>		
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		<p>proposal involving evidence from service users.</p> <p>2) Recommends that in future the committee is made aware of issues of a sensitive and emotive concern to local communities as potential items for scrutiny.</p>		
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