



Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Children's Social Care and Learning

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2017
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

AGENDA

9.30 am Pre-meeting Discussion

This session is for members of the Committee only. It is to allow the members time to discuss lines of questioning, areas for discussion and what needs to be achieved during the meeting.

10.30 am Formal Meeting Begins

| Agenda Item | Time | Page No |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | 10:30 | |
| 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To declare any Personal or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. | | |
| 3 MINUTES To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 5 th September 2017. | | 7 - 34 |
| 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS | 10:35 | |



Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in the county to put a question to a Scrutiny Committee about any issue that has an impact on their local community or the county as a whole.

Members of the public, who have given prior notice, will be invited to put their question in person.

The Cabinet Member and responsible officers will then be invited to respond.

Further information and details on how to register can be found through the following link and by then clicking on 'Public Questions'.

<http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=788>

There has been a question submitted by a member of the public which will be published as a supplementary paper prior to the meeting.

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| 5 | CHAIRMAN'S REPORT For the Chairman of the Committee to provide an update on recent scrutiny related activity. | 10:50 | |
| 6 | COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES For members of the Committee to provide an update on any issue they are investigating on behalf of the Committee. | | |
| 7 | CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME For Committee Members to ask Mr Warren Whyte questions on current key issues for the Children's Services portfolio. | 11:00 | |
| 8 | EARLY HELP To seek Members' views on the proposals for a new approach to helping children and families earlier to ensure small problems do not escalate. | 11:10 | 35 - 54 |
| | Contributors: | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services• Ms Gladys Rhodes White, Interim Executive Director for Children's Services• Mrs Joy Shakespeare, Head of Early Help | | |
| 9 | THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE ACTION PLAN To provide Members with an opportunity to look at progress | 11:40 | 55 - 62 |

with implementing the Educational Psychology Service Action Plan.

Contributors

- Miss Sarah Callaghan, Service Director Education
- Mr Craig Tribe, Principal Educational Psychologist

10 PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1 2017-18 **12:05** **63 - 80**

This item is for the Committee to review performance across the Children's Services and Education and Skills Portfolios and question Cabinet Members on areas of underperformance.

Contributors

- Mr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Ms Gladys Rhodes White, Interim Executive Director for Children's Services.

11 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER **12:25** **81 - 106**

For Members to look at the performance of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service and current resourcing.

Contributors

- Mr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Mrs Julie Davies, Head of Children's Quality Standards and Performance

12 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME **12:40** **107 - 108**

To note the current work programme and contribute ideas for potential items to be looked at in future meetings

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING **12:40**

To note the next meeting of the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee on 5th December 2017, Mezzanine Room 1, New County Hall, Aylesbury.

Purpose of the committee

The role of the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee is to hold decision-makers to account for improving outcomes and services for Buckinghamshire.

The Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee shall have the power to scrutinise all issues in relation to the remit of the Children's Social Care and Learning Business Unit. This will include, but not exclusively, responsibility for scrutinising issues in relation to:

- Nurseries and early years education
- Schools and further education

- The Bucks Learning Trust
- Quality standards and performance in education
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Learning and skills
- Adult learning
- Children and family services
- Early intervention
- Child protection, safeguarding and prevention
- Children in care (looked after children)
- Children's psychology
- Children's partnerships
- Youth provision
- The Youth Offending Service

** In accordance with the BCC Constitution, this Committee shall act as the designated Committee responsible for the scrutiny of Education matters.*

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For further information please contact: Kevin Wright on 01296 387832, email: kwright@buckscc.gov.uk

Members

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Mr A Collingwood | Mr B Roberts |
| Mrs I Darby | Mrs L Sullivan |
| Mr D Dhillon (C) | Ms J Ward (VC) |
| Mr M Hussain | Mr G Williams |
| Mr N Hussain | Ms K Wood |
| Mrs W Mallen | |

Co-opted Members

Mr D Babb, Church of England Representative
Mr K Hamblin, Maintained Primary School Parent Governor Representative
Mr M Moore, Roman Catholic Church





Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Children's Social Care and Learning

Minutes

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 5 September 2017, in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.30 am and concluding at 1.18 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>. The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr A Collingwood, Mrs I Darby, Mr D Dhillon, Mr M Hussain, Mr N Hussain, Mr B Roberts, Mrs L Sullivan, Ms J Ward, Mr G Williams and Ms K Wood

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

Mrs M Aston and Mr D Babb

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr M Appleyard and Mr W Whyte

OFFICERS PRESENT

Ms S Callaghan, Ms M Edmonds, Mr J Fowler, Ms G Rhodes White and Ms V Trundell

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr M Moore, Mr K Hamblin and Mrs W Mallen.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were noted:



- Mr G Williams - Chairman of Bucks Learning Trust Commissioning Committee and a member of the Fundraising Board at Dr Challoner's Grammar School.
- Mr N Hussain - Board member at Aylesbury College and a Board Member of BEST and the Healthy Living Centre.
- Ms I Darby - Governor at Robertswood Primary and Dr Challoner's Grammar School.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman told the Committee of his attendance at an adoption panel information meeting which had been very useful prior to attending an adoption panel arranged for next month.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Mrs Darby, Mr Williams and Mr Collingwood updated the Committee on their attendance at the children looked after and care leavers celebration event which they had found to be a very humbling experience and a good introduction to the work of the Select Committee. They thanked all those concerned.

Mr Dhillon asked Committee Members to let Mr Wright, Committee and Governance Adviser, know if they wanted to undertake any Children's Services work shadowing.

Mr Collingwood updated the Committee on his visit to a Social Worker's team meeting and acknowledged the excellent work of the team. He was due to visit a resource panel and an adoption panel during September.

7 CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The Chairman welcomed Mr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to the meeting.

Mr Whyte updated the Committee as follows:

- He had undertaken a number of visits to:
 - Front line social work and prevention teams
 - A children's home
 - Children's Court and
 - A Children's Centre

- Two meetings had been held with the refreshed Children's Partnership Board.
- He was now attending the South East Lead Members Forum.

In response to Members concerns around timescales for increasing placements for children and young people within Buckinghamshire, Mr Whyte explained that a two year programme had already commenced, with recruitment for new residential home managers underway with a view to having Managers in place as early as January.

Members queried how the service would prioritise individual cases to bring back into Buckinghamshire. Ms Gladys Rhodes White, Executive Director for Children's Social Care, explained that each case would be looked at individually and an assessment carried out to look at the advantages and disadvantages for each child or young person.

Ms Rhodes White explained that it was sometimes in a person's best interest to be placed a distance away from home, although these cases were not common.

Members asked for a breakdown of the percentage of cases that were placed out of county because it was in a child's best interest compared to the percentage of those cases that were placed out of county because there was no option to place locally.

ACTION: Ms Rhodes White.

8 VOICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON INQUIRY - RECOMMENDATION MONITORING

The Chairman welcomed:

- Mr Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Ms Gladys Rhodes White, Executive Director, Children's Services
- Laura, Guest Young Person
- Eve, Guest Young Person
- Mr James Fowler, Youth Service Manager
- Ms Emily Dover, Youth Worker

Laura and Eve gave a summary of how they were involved in providing the views of children and young people and Ms Rhodes White summarised the progress so far against each of the recommendations from the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions about:

- Transition arrangements for children and young people moving into adulthood.
- Ways of engaging with young children to provide their views.
- The quality and ease of use of the website for children and young people.
- How well children and young people felt they were listened to and whether things were improving.
- Hit rates of the website.

- How the service let children and young people know what they have done to address feedback.

The following points were made by Laura and Eve in response to the Committee's questioning:

- Transition arrangements e.g. from school to college were good with support provided by schools and youth workers in a number of ways.
- Laura was the joint chair of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) forum which helped to ensure all SEND children and young people's voices were heard
- There was work going on to promote Youth Voice in schools e.g. publicity through assemblies and poster campaigns but there was still more to do.
- Laura had worked on developing the "local offer" web pages but both Laura and Eve thought the websites for children and families could still be made easier to use particularly for providing feedback.
- The Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) website was good but needed to be publicised to children and young people more.
- Some children and young people did not have internet access and so this needed to be taken into account when provided information and opportunities to feedback.
- Eve and Laura felt that they personally were listened to but that they did not always know what had happened as a result of their feedback.

Mr Fowler advised that if children and young people were asked to contribute to service improvement work, they would be given IT equipment to help.

Ms Rhodes White confirmed that she would provide data on how often the children's services website was used including data to show trends over time.

ACTION: Ms Rhodes White

Ms Rhodes White also explained the process for transition planning for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities into adult services.

Mr Whyte confirmed that advisers and social workers were now working jointly on transition planning and that the "Staying Put Policy" was being refreshed to make pathways clearer.

Members of the Committee asked the service to engage the help of the Director of Technology Services and involve children and young people in further developing a website hub - (recommendation 4).

ACTION: Ms Rhodes White

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED to delegate the RAG rating of the recommendations to the Chairman with the ratings being shared with the Committee after the meeting.

9 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME ACTIONS - RESPONSE TO THIRD OFSTED MONITORING VISIT.

Mr Whyte and Ms Rhodes White presented the report.

Mr Whyte made the following points:

- Ofsted's 4th monitoring letter had been received since the report was written.
- He shared Ofsted's concerns about the pace of improvement and had made it clear to the management team about focussing on the pace of change.

Ms Rhodes White explained that the last 2 monitoring visits had focused on children looked after and those leaving care and that the next Ofsted intervention would be a full 4 week inspection starting sometime between September and December 2017.

Members questioned Mr Whyte and Ms Rhodes White on:

- Why weekly performance and improvement monitoring had ceased only to have to be re-instated later.
- The availability of the Improvement Plan to the Committee.
- Being able to evidence improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Involving children and young people on the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Managers' misunderstandings around practice processes.
- The need to increase the pace of improvement.

The following main points were made in response to the questions.

- Following improvement in some areas initially, the service may have taken its focus off these areas too early before improvement processes had been embedded and so it had been necessary to re-instate increased monitoring.
- Ofsted had commented on some sustained improvement in some areas e.g. in return interviews for children going missing.
- Mr Whyte held Officers to account through quarterly performance reviews to ensure stable improvement.
- The Improvement Plan would be provided to the Committee

- **ACTION: Ms Rhodes White**

- A "so what" column would be added to the Improvement Plan to help measure the outcome of improvement actions on children and young people.
- The best way to measure outcomes was to ask children and young people themselves and also monitor "negative" key performance indicators (e.g. "Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)").
- The timings of the Corporate Parenting Panel would be reviewed to start later so children and young people could attend.

ACTION: Mr Whyte

- A young person would be appointed as a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel and be a champion for children looked after and care leavers.
- There was a process of self-evaluation being undertaken by the service to identify any misunderstandings around social care practice processes by managers and staff.
- The pace of improvement had been a concern but was being addressed with renewed focus; through improved recruitment, the Cabinet Member challenging middle management and a new Director of Children's Services due to start in October.

10 PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

The Chairman welcomed:

- Mr Mike Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- Miss Sarah Callaghan, Service Director Education and
- Mrs Vivian Trundell, Education Entitlement Manager

The Cabinet Member and Officers:

- Acknowledged that the level of permanent exclusions was not acceptable.
- Outlined the need for a robust response which would include a strong focus on prevention and early help.
- Focussed on the need for strong partnership working with schools and learning from good practice and expertise within Buckinghamshire and elsewhere.

Members questioned the Cabinet Member and Officers on:

- The speed of the response by the service so far.
- Schools reporting a lack of support to manage the issue.
- A lack of communication between schools and the local authority.
- The sudden rise in numbers of permanent exclusions in 2014/15.
- The need to act quickly to make improvements so as to positively impact on children and young people affected.
- Partnership working, including working with the NHS in responding to the issue.
- Access to better quality data and analysis to help understand the key issues and timelines.

The following responses were made by the Cabinet Member and Officers:

- It was imperative that the issues that were leading to children and young people being permanently excluded were identified much earlier and needed to be linked to the Early Help programme.
- Prevention and support panels were being piloted to help support schools by bringing together expertise where good practice was identified and an Inclusion Charter was being developed.

- Children's Services had not always acted as quickly as it should have and had been too reactive. The push to address the issue through the Early Help process would aim to address this.
- There was a wish to bring Educational Psychologists into schools to provide support earlier but the focus had been on Educational Psychologists doing statutory assessments. The new Early Help approach aimed to reduce the need for statutory assessment by intervening earlier.
- A number of issues had contributed to the large increase since 2014/15 including:
 - changes to Central Government guidance in 2012.
 - issues relating to children's mental health impacting nationally.
 - reduced resourcing.
- There needed to be a culture change and a new approach between schools and the local authority through better joint working and communications which was starting to happen.
- Central Government policies were making it essential for schools to also take increased responsibility in preventing permanent exclusions.
- There was recognition that the situation needed to improve quickly with the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services keeping pressure on officers to show numbers reducing.
- Early identification of issues should happen at a number of points where families interacted with the Council and partners including, pre-birth services, first point of contact, Children's Centres, pre-schools and nursery schools.
- Once issues were identified it was important to wrap relevant services around the family to provide support.
- It was important that children entered education with the ability to deal with social situations and curriculum expectations that they would be faced with.
- Although the Early Help programme approach may result in fewer Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, where appropriate, EHCP would still be used.
- It was recognised that the current set of data on exclusions and analysis still needed to be improved and work was underway. Any new data would be shared with the Committee.

ACTION: Ms Rhodes White

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED that:

- **a further in depth review by the Committee would be undertaken on the issue.**
- **the Committee would scrutinise the outcomes of the prevention and support panels once the pilot had been completed.**

11 EDUCATION STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Maria Edmonds – Education Strategy Manager to the meeting.

Mr Mike Appleyard, Miss Sarah Callaghan and Mrs Maria Edmonds presented the report and summarised the key points.

Members of the Committee asked questions about the following:

- The quality of secondary education for children and young people in Aylesbury.
- Whether the strategy would still include as a driver, central government's policy of increased selection, now that this appeared to have been dropped
- The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust's (BLT) involvement in the strategy.
- How the strategy would manage the increased independence of academies from local authorities and pastoral care issues.

During discussions, the Cabinet Member and Officers made the following points:

- Reducing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers would be an important part of the strategy and there would be key performance indicators included so that the issue could be monitored.
- It would be important to tackle the underperformance of some vulnerable children and young people in helping secondary schools in Aylesbury improve.
- Once completed, the results of all consultations would be analysed and developed into a draft strategy which would be brought back to the Committee

Action: Committee and Governance Adviser

- The new strategy would be more specific about actions for Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to help improve areas of underperformance.
- The level of engagement between academies, grammar schools and the Council was strong and there had been positive feedback about pastoral care.

12 CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE INQUIRY- RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING

The Committee reviewed the actions being undertaken to implement the two recommendations still outstanding

The Committee questioned the low level of participation in exit interviews and asked whether these could be undertaken by an independent officer rather than the line manager of the person leaving.

ACTION: Ms Rhodes White

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED to delegate the RAG rating of the recommendations to the Chairman with the ratings being shared with the Committee after the meeting.

13 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the work programme and requested that an item on the Early Help Review be added.

ACTION: Committee and Governance Adviser

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee will take place on 17th October 2017, Mezzanine Room 1, New County Offices, Aylesbury. There will be a private pre-meeting for Members from 9.30am

CHAIRMAN

Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations after 6 months

Inquiry: Voice of the Child

Select Committee Inquiry Report Completion Date: Recommendations accepted by Cabinet on 9th January 2017

Date of this update: July 2017

Lead Officer responsible for this response: Carol Douch

Cabinet Member that has signed-off this update: Warren Whyte

Recommendation 1

That sufficient tools are readily available for all people working with children and young people to gather and record views for example books, pictures, games and toys and that purchasing cards are made available to buy additional items quickly.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: End of February 2017 and ongoing

Original Response and Actions

- We have made a number of tools available to children’s social workers and we will consider what other tools are available for other staff who work with children.
- Over the last 4 months there has been an increasing number of children and workers using the apps
- We will review with our commissioned providers to identify any gaps in access to relevant tools and review the ability to purchase new items within the scope of the commissioned service budget.
- We will review availability and use of purchasing cards by social work staff.

Progress Update After 6 months

There is clear evidence to demonstrate that Social Workers have increased their knowledge and application of using electronic applications and tools for obtaining children’s wishes and feelings. This is evidenced through the Monthly Senior Management Audits that has demonstrated that a variety of tools are being used by Social Workers.

Social Workers evidence the children’s wishes and feelings through their visits, meetings and written reports and are more able to articulate the children’s journeys through Children’s Social Care. The Tools Library is being upgraded on a regular basis (as and when new tools are being made available by other agencies, Social Workers, etc.)

Children are also able to use the MOMO (Mind of My Own) application. They can speak with their Social Workers, Managers and Practice Improvement Managers and share their views.

The electronic ePEP (electronic Personal Education Plan) for Looked After Children (LAC) is co-ordinated by The Virtual School in conjunction with the school, social

worker, carer and pupil. The vast majority of pupils attend their termly PEP and find the interactive platform user friendly and fun to use as it is adapted according to age and ability. (There is one specifically for Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils).

Using this information targets are set and the Pupil Premium is allocated accordingly. These targets are reviewed every term. This input allows pupils to request additional activities and educational games and resources.

Pupils are rewarded for their participation via a voucher scheme.

The Virtual School distributes age and interest appropriate books to all primary aged and Early Years Pupils and to any older pupils who request it. This is based on a detailed knowledge in relation to ability and interest. The pupils contribute to this via PEPs and letters from their carers. We have a huge number of compliments and letters of gratitude from carers and pupils for their books.

All social workers have access to a team purchasing card via their Business Support Officer to enable them to purchase appropriate resources to facilitate the child's voice.

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 2

That more innovative way are introduced to increase the amount of quality time workers within social care have to gather the views of children and young people, particularly within the children in need service.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Julie Davies

Action by date: January 2017

Original Response and Actions

- "Mind of My Own" app was introduced in early summer 2016 which is a means in which children and young people in our care can share their wishes and feelings in a secure way on line.
- The implementation has been successful and we are now developing the tool further to ensure it is accessible to children and young people with disabilities.
- We will consider the opportunities as part of the restructure of the children in need service and review its effectiveness.

Progress Update After 6 months

Mind of My Own (MOMO) was introduced in Buckinghamshire April 2016 with a specific application for children with disability available from December 2016.

For all child protection review conferences taking place on and after 1st July 2017, social workers will be expected to support the use of MoMo One (for children aged 8 years and above) and MOMO Express (for children under 8 years of age and disabled children) to gain children's views for all review child protection conferences at a statutory child protection visit during the 5 weeks before the conference takes place.

Buckinghamshire Children's Services were recently nominated and reached the final for an award at the national 'MOMO' event. Buckinghamshire County Council were nominated in two categories - fastest implementation and the highest number of children registered to use the app in our drive to improve the way we gather the views of children and young people.

As of 24th August 2017, 260 young people had MoMo accounts, 274 workers had downloaded MOMO onto their phones and 287 statements had been received from children and young people.

Social Workers attend the termly Personal Education Plan meetings for looked after children.

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 3

That participation group for children and young people with disabilities is established so that their collective voice can be heard and disseminated to Commissioners, Youth Service and Social Care to act upon.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Lead Officer: James Fowler

Action by date: February 2017

Original Response and Actions

This has recently been established in the Youth Service as part of our disability participation work. We can liaise with our commissioned providers to help disseminate details about this group and help identify potentially interested young people to take part.

Actions:

- Share Terms of Reference more widely across commissioners and Social Care
- Share/add to existing work plan for the group
- Develop process for sharing outcomes to relevant parties.

Progress Update After 6 months

There is a Special Educational Needs / Disabilities (SEND) youth forum, young people age ranges from 15-19 with a variety of disabilities.

SEND youth forum priorities are led by the young people of the forum and last year's topic was mental health. This year the SEND youth forum have chosen the topic – 'raise disability awareness to help prevent bullying'. The forum will be working in partnership with Alfriston School on this priority.

The disability work plan priorities 17/18 were agreed by the Head of Service for SEND. The set priorities were agreed following young people recommendations along with information and additional gaps identified by other services such as, SEND IAS (SEND Information, Advice and Support) , Adult Social Care Transitions Team and Change for Children SEND lead.

Young people from the SEND youth forum, special schools/colleges, post-19 provision, Talkback and Macintyre are currently being engaged to complete priorities from the work plan.

All services and young people involved in the work plan priorities are regularly updated with progress and outcomes. The voice of the child is shared with key partners including SEND Team, Transitions Team, and Schools. As well as included in Change for Children Programme, Local Offer working group etc.

The SEND Youth Forum has produced a booklet called 'MY Education, Health & Care Plan' which is sent out when the Local Authority agrees to carry out an Education Health Care (EHC) needs assessment. This advises the young person what to expect from the process, what things mean and what to do if they are unhappy with the EHC plan (if one is issued).

The ePEP has a section for children with disabilities with a Makaton symbol pupils part.

Feedback to key professionals and other relevant parties is shared as a matter of course as part of the work completed on each priority of the Work Plan 2017/18. In addition key partners/ individuals are invited to attend SEND Youth Forum.

Young people have helped to produce SEND Youth Forum promotional material including young people's flyer and promotional video.

Current SEND Youth Forum campaign priorities identified by young people include:

1. Young people felt it was important to raise other children and young people's awareness of disability to prevent bullying of vulnerable young people.

The forum have created a poster for the MASKS (Make A Special Kid Smile) charity exhibition and are now working on a project to introduce students from mainstream schools to their local SEN schools and placements. The forum will be working in partnership with Alfriston school for this work.

2. Young people felt there needed to be more information for young people on supporting transitions into adulthood.

Young people from the SEND Youth Forum helped create and appeared in 6 short information films about SEND post 16 provision. The films include a young person's tour of a college, therapies available on site, community provision by Macintyre and Talkback and residential placements with Aster Lodge. The films show SEND post 16 provision we currently offer and help young people and their families better understand the Local Offer and how the different services support can support young people with disabilities transition into adult services.
(<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=GIVSsf4UkOq>)

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 4

That a specific Voice of the Child and Young Person website hub is developed to :

- Publicise prominently the relevant email addresses, phone numbers and social media for children and young people to give their views.
- Provide links to all relevant BCC and partners' website pages that focus on and provide a way for children and young people to give their views.
- Let children and young people know what has happened as a result of their feedback. (You said, we did)
- Clearly signpost services for children and young people in a way that is easy to understand.
- Publicise the rights of children and young people to be heard

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: End of January 2017

Original Response and Actions

Progress Update After 6 months

- A specific website area has been designed with children and young people to ensure key information is accessible to them. The final technical details are being completed and the website will go live at the end of January 2017.
- Buckinghamshire CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health) have recently re-launched their website following significant input from young people which addresses a number of the inquiry recommendations for this group of service users:
<http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/fresh/bucks/>
- The Bucks Family Information Service (BFIS) website has sections dedicated to young people, including a section for young people to share their own views, vlogs etc (Your Space). There is also a Youth Space section that could be developed further with rights etc. BFIS is managed by Anna Ellis.
- The Youth Service also has a LAC website linked to the Children in Care Council called kidsincare.org.uk

- The specific website area for children to understand their journey through social care system went live as planned, with an interactive tool so that they can access key information about what will happen at different points of the child's journey. The information has been co-produced and is in accessible language for children and young people.
- We do Care website clearly outlines the rights of children in care and aftercare and the pledge from the County Council and there is a link to this from the BFIS website.
- Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Board has a specific area with key information for children to understand what to do to keep safe

Committee RAG Rating:



Recommendation 5

That the recording and discussion of children and young people's views are strengthened by:

- Work with staff across each business area to draw up a good practice guidance document on the process of recording and discussing the views of children and young people to improve consistency.
- Making discussion at social care supervision meetings & recording on the supervision template of children's and young people's views obligatory.
- Investigating whether the field within the ICS system to record the views of children and young people can be made mandatory to complete.
- As part of the Business Unit's work on Business Intelligence, look to set up a data hub in which all views gathered and recorded, from whichever service, can be stored, accessed and analysed from one place by multiple users.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Carol Douch

Action by date: June 2017

| Original Response and Actions | Progress Update After 6 months |
|--|---|
| <p>Good practice guidance on recording children's views currently exists for children's social care and is currently specific to this service area. The quality of this is audited on a regular basis through supervision and through regular auditing. Guidance will be shared across the business unit through management and team meetings over the next 4 months.</p> <p>It is currently a requirement in supervision and group supervision to consider the views of children and young people when decisions are made about assessment, effective planning and reviewing. It is monitored through supervision and file auditing.</p> <p>There is a mandatory field in LCS about detailing when a child has been seen.</p> <p>Some of the views of children and young people are confidential to that child and their circumstance. Information is already analysed in relation to themes about complaints and compliments. We will investigate the possibility of the BI Service finding a solution and essentially if we can achieve this without compromising</p> | <p>The monthly case file audits undertaken across Children's Services evidence that the voice of the child is consistently being considered in assessments, interventions, planning and review. The child's voice is at the centre of what children's social care do. The guidance and regular management oversight has ensured this area of improvement has moved forward.</p> <p>The supervision procedure and template has been reviewed and updated and formally launched in June 2017. The template now includes a prompt for the manager to discuss with the social worker a specific children's journey and this is then recorded on the child's record in LCS (the case recording system). (This will include Aftercare once all of the records have been transferred over)</p> <p>The Rights to Information Team in Children's Services share anonymised outcomes and lessons learnt from individual complaints (both Stage 1 and Stage 2) in a thematic way that does not compromise confidentiality. For example, themes are included in the Getting to Good newsletters, form the basis of broader practice discussions at the regular County Manager meetings and Practice Improvement Managers encourage sharing by their Team Managers at their team meetings.</p> |

The Good Practice Guidance document to highlight examples of good practice in schools currently that enables the voice of the child to be shared including:

- Responsive marking
- Target setting sessions
- School reports
- School Council
- Pupil Form/Class Reps
- Clubs and participation groups
- Via PTA activities
- Pupil surveys
- (via Autumn Term 2017 Liaison Groups)

Committee RAG Rating:




Recommendation 6

To strengthen the strategic approach:

- a. Ensure that the voice of the child and young person is an overarching priority within Business Unit strategies, for example the Children’s Strategy and its associated implementation plan, to include specific actions and performance measures.
- b. Make sure children and young people are part of the recruitment panel for appointments supporting children and young people

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Lead Officer: James Fowler. Action by date: June 2017

| Original Response and Actions | Progress Update After 6 months |
|--|--|
| <p>a) It is already one of the overarching priorities as set out in the Children’s Strategy that Children are at the heart of Buckinghamshire County Council’s strategic priorities. We will consider how we monitor the voice of the child across our contract management function from a commissioned services perspective and look to embed an appropriate mechanism. We will ask BI to develop a possible solution to assist us in gathering the views of the children we work with by June 2017.</p> <p>b) The Youth Service has a pool of trained young people who can be available for recruitment processes. Action: Ensure the inclusion of C&YP from the trained pool of young people are involved in recruitment process, and the process to access them through HR and the Youth service is reviewed by June 2017.</p> | <p>a) The voice of the child and young person is an overarching priority within Children’s Services, and Safeguarding our Vulnerable is one of three overarching priorities for the Council.</p> <p>How a provider captures the voice of the child is key question in commissioning of new services and in monitoring and challenging providers in contract management.</p> <p>b) The Youth Service has a pool of trained young people and will continue to provide training and support for young people to enable them to participate in recruitment processes. Recent sessions delivered in April and May 2017. Planned session in October half-term specifically targeting Children Looked After and Care Leaver’s. Additional plans to incorporate interview training in YS existing employability programmes to increase number of trained young people.</p> <p>Liaising with HR to include process for requesting young people’s interview panels added to existing ‘Recruitment Journey’ guidance.</p> <p>Young people from Youth Voice, We Do Care and SEND Youth Forum to support refresh of young people’s interview panels recruitment material.</p> <p>Young people’s interview panels were recently involved in the recruitment of the DCS and ‘Step up to Social Work’ interviews</p> <p>A young people panel has been involved in the recruitment of all SEN Offices and Managers over the last 2 years.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Committee RAG Rating: </p> |

Recommendation 7

That at each meeting of the wider leadership team there is a standing agenda item on the voice of the child and young person to focus on:


- Ensuring the voice of the child and young person is included in key strategies and plans
- Understanding the themes and lessons that can be learned from analysing the views of children and young people from across the different service areas.
- Using analysis of children and young people’s views to identify gaps and duplication in service provision and ensure effective and efficient use of resources.
- Feeding back on key issues to the Senior Management Team meeting and Business Unit Board.

And that once a year, a wider leadership team meeting is devoted to the voice of the child and young person

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Lead Officer: Gladys Rhodes-White

Action by date: February 2017

| Original Response and Actions | Progress Update After 6 months |
|--|---|
| <p>The agenda will be changed to ensure that this is considered at each WLT meeting. Once a year the meeting will be dedicated to the Voice of the Child.</p> <p>Key themes identified from children’s voices will help to amend and develop children’s services policies and procedures and will be included in an annual review.</p> | <p>Wider Leadership Team across children services has had 2 facilitated sessions by Local Government Association focussed on the cross cutting themes in children’s services and ensuring the voice of the child is central to the work that is completed. The next WLT meeting is scheduled for November and the theme will be Voice of Child.</p> <p>Key themes are used to amend and develop children’s services policies an example is Buckinghamshire Looked after Children and Placement Sufficiency strategy which is focussed on ensuring that there are placements in Buckinghamshire which enables children to be maintained in their school and keep contact with their family friend and community.</p> <p>Another recent example of co-production of work with young people is the revised Pathway way plan which is now user friendly and enables the child and young person’s voice to be central to the planning.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Committee RAG Rating: </p> |

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Recommendation 8

That Voice of the Child and Young Person Leaders in the CSCL Business Unit and throughout the organisation are identified and whose role is to maintain a high profile for this area of work, share good practice and ensure that the voice of the child and young person becomes a more detailed cross cutting theme in strategies, plans and projects.

Lead Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Gladys Rhodes-White

Action by date: Ongoing

Original Response and Actions**Progress Update After 6 months**

This is the responsibility of all staff and is one of the overarching priorities of the Council as identified in the Children's Strategy.

- Also it is the specific role of the Principal Children's Social Worker to ensure to maintain the profile and to challenge where this is not evident
- Simon Billenness and Theresa Carlyle lead on our Youth voice work in the Youth Service.

A report from the Principal Social Worker was considered at the senior leadership team and One Council Board. A newly appointed Principal Social Worker has been appointed and will check the progress of the annual report and to be the champion for children's social work and the voice of the child. He has met with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services in his first few weeks in post.

The Youth Service delivers Youth Voice work including the Children in Care Council and SEND Youth Forum. The Youth Voice initiatives provide a mechanism for the Council to consult with young people on a regular basis and maintain open dialogue. Both the Children in Care Council and SEND Youth Forum have an annual work plan that includes key priorities identified by young people and officers and link to priorities for BCC.

In addition Youth Voice feed into wider strategies and plans for example planned consultation as part of the current Change for Children Programme.

Sarah Barnett leads on Youth Voice. James Fowler oversees Children in Care and SEND YV work.

Current approach to broaden contributions to Youth Service Youth Voice events include building an online community to enable children and young people to participate anytime and anywhere, ongoing engagement with key partners such as schools and other youth sector organisations to promote the Youth Voice opportunities. Developing young people as Youth Voice Ambassadors to recruit other young people to the Youth Voice community and promote streams of work

and outcomes.

Committee RAG Rating:



RAG Status Guidance (For the Select Committee's Assessment)

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | <i>Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.</i> | | <i>Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction</i> |
| | <i>Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.</i> | | <i>Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented</i> |

Children's Workforce Scrutiny Inquiry Progress Update on Recommendations

Interim Progress Report 12 months on


Select Committee Inquiry Report Completion Date: April 2016

Date of this update: 10th August 2017



Lead Officer responsible for this response: Carol Douch


Cabinet Member: Warren Whyte:

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| Accepted Recommendations | Original Response and Actions | Progress Update after 12 months | Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status) |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Recommendation 1: There should be systematic analysis by the Children's Social Care & Learning Business Unit Management Team of the findings of social worker exit interviews.</p> | <p>A new exit interview process has been adopted since March 2015. An analysis is undertaken of them already and reports to the workforce development Board on a quarterly basis. Example of trends identified so far include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-life /balance • Career progression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development meetings take place on a quarterly basis to consider the findings of exit interviews for staff leaving the Council or internally transferring to other teams. This assists in identifying what needs to be implemented to address any recurring themes for staff leaving BCC • Data gathered is also taken to the CSCL Monthly Resource Meetings attended by Heads of Service, PIMs, and HR where both compliance with the exit interview process and specific service/HR issues/actions are raised and addressed • Employees who leave employment in Social Worker roles voluntarily are encouraged to take part in a confidential exit interview, either with a manager from another department or with their line manager. Numbers of leavers and leaving reasons are monitored on a quarterly basis and | <p align="center"></p> <p>Agreed as implemented by the Committee on 31st January 2017</p> |

| Accepted Recommendations | Original Response and Actions | Progress Update after 12 months | Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | | <p>an annual exit interview report is produced after the end of each financial year. During the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, 46 employees left BCC. Of the 46 voluntary leavers, 12 completed an exit interview (26%). The analysis that was undertaken therefore covered feedback from only those 12 individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over this reporting period although the number of exit interviews conducted has increased, more needs to be done to capture the views of leavers. In order to address this new online process “Last Opinion” has been devised in order to capture the views of leavers. This new system is due to be launched shortly • Key messages from the exit interviews have been fed into an improvement action plan. Areas for improvement are central to the Workforce Strategy action plan and specific improvement suggestions will be reviewed and actions to address incorporated. • Actions in relation to workload have been addressed and are reported at performance meetings • Career progression is now one of the features of the retention offer and monthly boards are held to manage this process. • These processes are now business as usual as workforce development meeting and Resource meetings are occurring on a regular basis with caseloads being reported at the monthly SMT | |

| Accepted Recommendations | Original Response and Actions | Progress Update after 12 months | Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status) |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | performance meetings. | |
| <p>Recommendation 2: Efforts should be made to address the underrepresentation of men in the social care workforce.</p> | <p>This was discussed at Workforce Development Board (WDB) on 22/4/16. The priority is to ensure that we attract competent social workers for permanent jobs, irrespective of their gender, as we still have too many agency workers. The gender of the workforce will continue to be monitored and benchmarked.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June 2017 22% of qualified social workers were on an agency contract, covering vacancies, sick leave, maternity and over establishment. If only the vacancies covered by agency staff is considered this figure drops to 18.5% • From April to end June 2017 – 13% of permanent staff were male and 87% female as opposed to 8% and 92% respectively between June and December 2016 • Between April and June 2017 we have 64 agency workers in HCPC posts, of which 72% were female and 28% male, very similar to the figures reported in last update report • Overall the composition of the Social Care workforce is Male 17% and Female 83% which shows some measured improvement in this trend. This compares to a National breakdown of 85% Female and 14% Male in 2016 (based on Guardian publication Social Lives 2017) |  |
| <p>Recommendation 3: Legal assurance should be sought around the implementation of Phase 2 of the South East Memorandum of Cooperation</p> | <p>A legal view has already been taken and incorporated into the Memorandum and the actions are deemed to be in line with employment law. The memorandum went live on 4th April 2016.</p> | <p>There is a South East Region Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) for managing the demand and supply of Children’s Social Workers across the south east region and with bordering councils.</p> <p>The purpose of this agreement has been to overcome some of the difficulties that many LAs have experienced</p> |  <p>Agreed as implemented by the Committee on 31st January 2017</p> |

| Accepted Recommendations | Original Response and Actions | Progress Update after 12 months | Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status) |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | <p>in relation to agency worker quality, and cost in order that there is cooperation between local authorities. In order to manage the mis-match of requirements i.e. under supply and increased demand for 21.9% of social workers, it was felt that there needed to be a more collaborative and strategic approach, particularly in relation to managing agency worker supply and demand and associated costs.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire has signed this agreement along with 16 other authorities in the South East and regularly attends the quarterly update meetings. Since the MoC has been in place the agency rate has been capped, and the movement of social workers has slowed.</p> <p>Any children's social worker leaving a permanent contract will not be employed on an agency contract by another authority in the region within 6 months</p> <p>The arrangements outlined in the SE Memorandum of Cooperation remain current at the time of writing this update in July 2017.</p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 4: The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services should take a lead on developing collaborative approaches on workforce issues with other</p> | <p>The Memorandum of Cooperation (Moc) has been agreed following collaborations across a number of Local Authorities. The training officer and HR attend a number of regional meetings to enhance collaboration.</p> <p>Examples of Regional Collaborations</p> | <p>The MoC quarterly review meetings are attended by Buckinghamshire senior Social Care managers and HR representatives and provide an opportunity for colleagues to share information and best practice. Key information is relayed back to the Workforce Development Group that is also held quarterly inside the Council and the monthly social care Resource Group.</p> <p>The organisation that facilitates the MoC, The South East</p> |  |

| Accepted Recommendations | Original Response and Actions | Progress Update after 12 months | Committee Assessment of Progress (RAG status) |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>authorities both nationally and locally.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning & Development Team are involved in a number of regional and national collaborative groups covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASYE, • Step Up to SW, • Four Programmes Group – comprising Bucks, Oxfordshire and 4 Universities • Skills for Care Social Work Education Group – comprising Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Bucks and Berkshire (4 unitaries) + all HEI's feeding in. • National forums and best practice workshops on related activities. | <p>Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP) provides project opportunities to allow colleagues to collaborate e.g. they will be running a project on Audit and Quality Assurance Procedures.</p> <p>We are also leading and involved in Newly Qualified Social Worker University programmes including the new graduate social work programmes - Step Up to Social Work and Frontline. In addition to the initiatives outlined above we are now sponsoring 5 colleagues to undertake the Open University Qualification in Social Work.</p> <p>There is an established pipeline of newly qualified Social Workers to start in CIN service; at present (July 2017) there are 14 NQSW in the process of joining. In addition, the Assessment team there are 2 NQSW joining the Assessment Team and one further colleague in CWD (Children with Disabilities). These colleagues will have protected number of children to work with so that they have the opportunity to further develop their skills. A new campaign to recruit NQSW for August and September 2017 is underway.</p> | |

RAG Status Guidance (For the Select Committee's Assessment)

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | <p><i>Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.</i></p> |  | <p><i>Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction</i></p> |
|---|--|---|---|



Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.



Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Title: | Early Help |
| Committee date: | Tuesday 17 October 2017 |
| Author: | Carol Douch |
| Contact officer: | Julie Tisbury jtisbury@buckscc.gov.uk 0772 008 5313 |
| Cabinet Member sign-off: | [Warren Whyte |

Purpose of Agenda Item

This item is at the request of the Select Committee to update them on the current Early Help public consultation and invite members to collectively contribute to the consultation.

Background

The Early Help Review is part of the Change for Children Transformation Programme. Details of the drivers for change and principles of the new model are contained within the Cabinet report 10.7.17.

We want to provide support to children and families who are most in need of our help, quickly and in the right way. There are many families who get support from a number of organisations to help with problems they are facing, but this support isn't always coordinated in a way that makes sense to the family. This causes confusion and frustration for the family and it doesn't always enable things to improve quickly enough, or for those improvements to be sustained.

There is a need to focus our resources on those who need our help the most. This may require changes to how we identify and interact with families in need in our communities. To achieve this, consultation with families, stakeholders and our staff about a new model of delivery is currently underway and will inform how we work in the future with families in need. The proposal we are consulting on aims to bring together all the people who work with families when problems are emerging, by creating one service: the Early Help service.



In future we will integrate services and organisations working with families, to ensure help is timely and effective.

Summary

A Cabinet paper was approved on 10.7.17 (publicly released 30.6.17), with agreement to go to public consultation on the Early Help Review. This went live on the 14.7.17, following 3 days call-in period after cabinet 10.7.17.

Mid-way through the consultation, feedback showed that more detail about the proposal would be useful. Further information was added about the current services and how these would change with the proposed new service. The consultation was extended to 16.10.17 (launched 4.9.17) to allow as much time as possible for responses.

A number of focus groups have been set up with targeted groups.

Key issues

The link to the consultation is available here:

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/care-for-children-and-families/improving-early-help-services-for-children-young-people-and-families/>

For information, the full list of consultation questions can also be found at appendix 1 and 2.

The questions that form the consultation and are for consideration/discussion at the Select Committee are:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for a new Early Help service?
- When improving the way we deliver services for children and their families, what are the most important things we should consider?
- Do you have any other comments on our proposal for a new Early Help service?

Resource implications

The Council's overall financial position and plans have led to service areas reviewing their performance against best practice. This has identified Early Help services where a new improved delivery model has the potential to deliver £3.3m of savings included within the Council's financial plans.



Next steps

Timeline for decisions:

- Early Help public consultation end 16.10.17
- Analysis of public consultation results.
- Cabinet decision 13.11.17 on implementing model.



YOU TELL US

Have your say - improving early help services for children and families in Buckinghamshire

Introduction

We all want our children and young people to be happy, healthy, safe and successful.

For Buckinghamshire County Council, that means making sure we give families the right support, in the best way, at the right time. Part of this is how we can support families better earlier, to avoid small problems getting bigger. We call this early help.

With early help, families get the support they need to overcome all sorts of problems. This could be:

- ▶ support with being a parent and doing it well
- ▶ debt advice and getting back into work
- ▶ building better relationships as a family
- ▶ how to get help for mental health, substance misuse or domestic abuse problems.

We want to work with families before their problems become too difficult to manage and help them to become resilient so they can cope with problems in the future using local support services.

Our focus is always on how to make life better for children and young people within their family.



Why do we need to change?

The needs of the community and the families in Buckinghamshire are changing.

- ▶ There are 131,000 children (0-19) in Bucks and this will increase to up to 145,000 by 2031.
- ▶ Although two thirds of the families that our children's services currently support live in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other larger towns, a third of families who need our support live in much smaller and rural areas.

We aren't always reaching the people most in need of our help, quickly enough or in the right ways.

- ▶ There are many families getting support from a number of organisations to help with problems they are facing as a family – but this support isn't always joined up. This causes confusion and frustration for the family, and it doesn't always make things better quickly or in a way that lasts.
- ▶ When there is one issue or problem in a family it affects everyone – so treating problems on their own doesn't work.
- ▶ Families want to tell their story once or to a small number of people that they trust.
- ▶ Many families are not getting the help they need early enough, meaning they end up needing much more support than they might have done if we had helped them sooner.
- ▶ We have reviewed the use of our early help services including children's centres and youth services. The evidence shows that they are not always helping the children and families that need it the most, so we need to change that.

Our proposed solution

We need to focus our time and money on those who need our help the most.

We also need to change how we reach out and interact with families in our communities.

We want to:

- ▶ support families earlier, so their circumstances improve quicker and problems don't become too difficult to manage.
- ▶ give families the tools to help them solve their own problems and also be more resilient in the future – so they know where they can go for help when they need it.

To do this, we plan to bring together all the people who work with children and young people aged up to 19 and their families in those early days when problems are getting tough, by creating one service: the Early Help Service.

This new service would be modelled around family workers who will be based in the community so they are closer to where the families who need

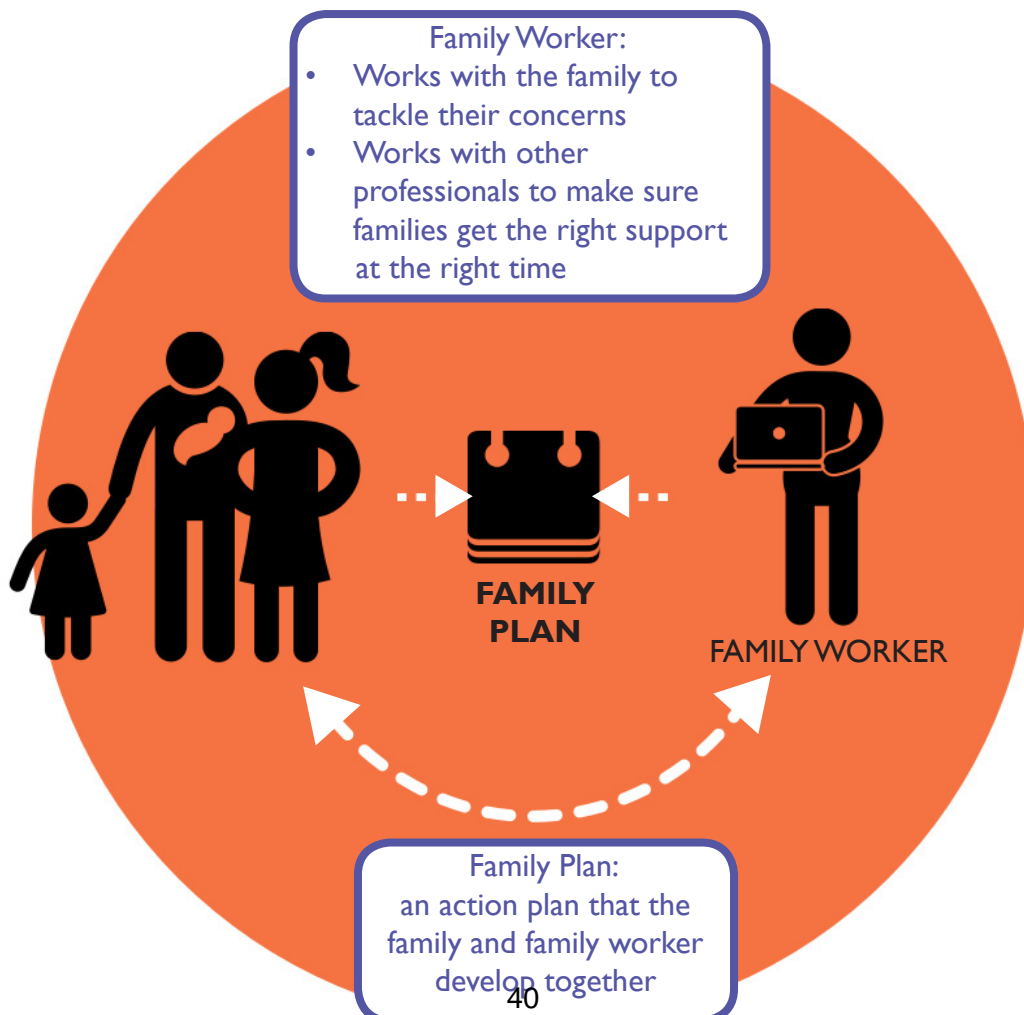
our support live. This will mean they can reach out to these families to work with them at home or in places they are most comfortable. This could be a local community venue or a coffee shop.

This will provide families with:

- ▶ support to manage ALL of the problems they are facing, with their consent and involvement.
- ▶ ONE person they can rely on: a family worker who will work with the family on an action plan to tackle all of their concerns and needs together, not separately.

The aim is to support families with early help and work with them to identify and resolve problems to be able to stay together. The end goal is always to give them the skills and strength to be able to cope with problems when they arise or at least know where to go to get that support earlier.

In the future, we hope to be able to bring other teams and organisations together to make this even better for families in Buckinghamshire. This could include people like health visitors, community groups and charities that work with families.



Doing this will mean changes.

We propose to redesign and bring together many of our services which provide help to children, young people and families in those early stages of a problem. This will involve some changes to existing early help services we currently deliver or commission. These include:

- ▶ Bucks Family Information Service
- ▶ Children's centres
- ▶ Advice and support for young people through Connexions (Adviza)
- ▶ Early Help coordinators
- ▶ Families First
- ▶ Family Resilience
- ▶ Support for children who have lived with domestic violence (Refuge and Outreach) (Women's Aid)
- ▶ Support for parents through Barnardo's
- ▶ Young carers' support
- ▶ Youth Services

We know that some children and families use these services for more social activities such as 'stay and play' sessions, toddler groups and youth clubs. These activities are already widely available across the county and we will continue to signpost people to these and other services that we know are still

needed and are popular. There may be opportunities in some locations for community groups or parish councils to become involved.

Activities, information, advice and support for families and children from 0-19 can be found on our website www.bucksfamilyinfo.org.uk.

As part of our plans, we will be developing the website and information to be even better in the future.

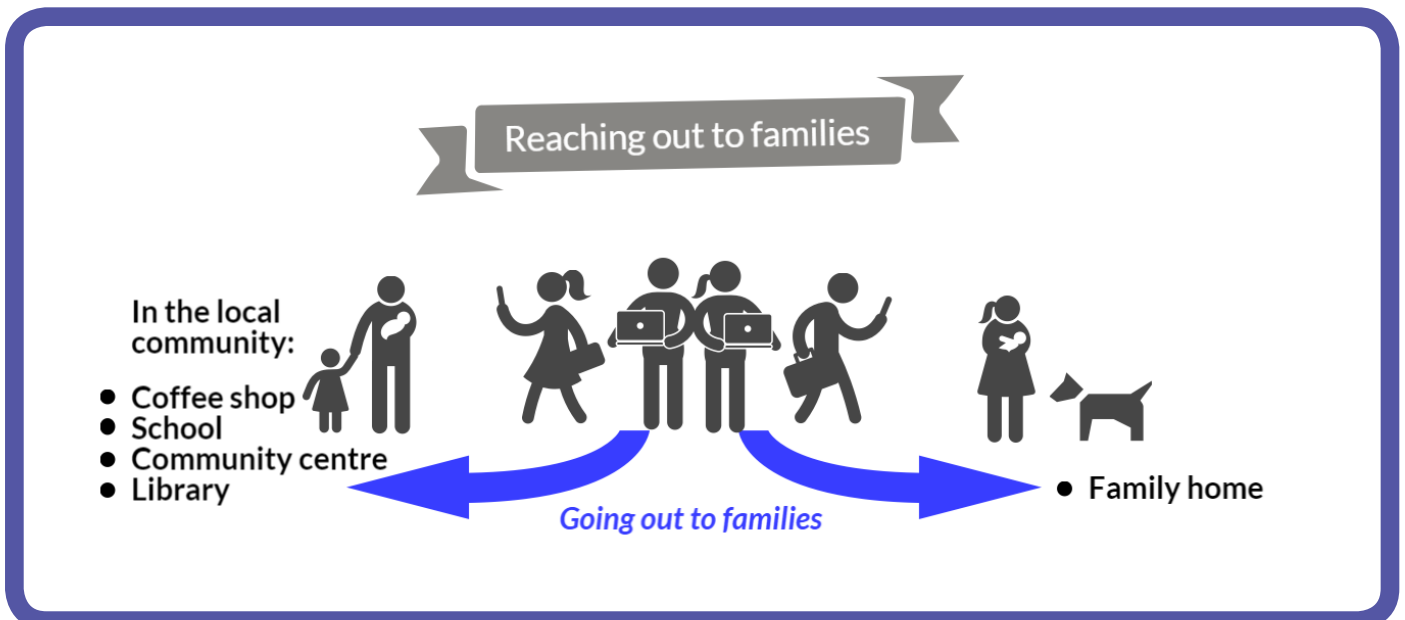
This model of Early Help service for children and families is already working well in many other parts of the country. We have gathered knowledge and research from these areas to help us develop how we think it could work best here in Buckinghamshire.

We have listened to the views of children and families that we work with to create a service that will meet their needs best, and will listen carefully to the responses gathered through this consultation.

We have been working with a number of families in a similar way in Buckinghamshire for a few years. We want to use this experience and knowledge to benefit all families in Buckinghamshire.

"It's better to ask for help earlier than when there's no other option. I wish I'd done it earlier. I'm not a bad parent, I just needed some guidance and ideas. Having someone to talk to outside of my friends and family has made a huge difference to our family life"

Amanda, mum of 3 from Aylesbury Vale



You tell us

We want your views on changes to services for children and young people aged 0 to 19 and their families in Buckinghamshire as detailed in this document.

You may respond as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Where possible we would encourage you to give your feedback online at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp. Please return this survey to your local library or to: Communications Team, Bucks County Council, New County Offices, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UA. All responses should be returned by 22 September 2017.

Questions

1. To what extent do you agree with the proposed solution (detailed on page two of this document) for the new Early Help service? (Please circle one of the following)

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

2. When improving the way we deliver services for children and their families, what are the most important things we should consider? (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

3. Do you have any other comments on our proposal for the Early Help service? (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

As part of our plans, we are also looking to improve the way families find information, advice and activities that are already available across the county such as ‘stay and play’ sessions, toddler groups and youth clubs.

To do this we want to understand how you find out about activities, information and advice for you and your family.

4. In the last 12 months, have you or your family used any of the following services? (Please tick all that apply)

- Play groups (e.g. ‘stay and play’ sessions, toddler groups)
- Health and wellbeing activities (e.g. baby massage, baby swimming, healthy eating, ante-natal)
- Support groups (e.g. SEN support groups, twins, mental health, lone parents)
- Clubs (arts, drama, holiday clubs, youth clubs)
- Buckinghamshire Family Information Service
- None of the above

5. How did you find out about these services? (Please tick all that apply)

- In your local area (posters, advertising)
- Through someone you already know (e.g. health visitor, family worker)
- By phone via the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service
- By phone via the customer service number at the county council
- Via the Internet on social media e.g. Facebook & Twitter
- Via the Internet Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website
- Via the Internet using a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing)
- Via a blog or forum (e.g. Mumsnet)
- Through friends or family
- Another way (please specify: _____)

6. How easy or difficult was it to find the information you needed? (Please circle one of the following)

Very easy Fairly easy Neither easy nor difficult Fairly difficult Very difficult

7. Do you have any other comments about how we can improve how you find information, advice and activities for you and your family? (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

About you

Please fill in this section to complete the questionnaire. This information enables us to use the results to understand the views of different groups of people. Please be assured that all the information you give will be kept completely confidential.

If you are responding as an individual, please answer questions 8-16; if you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please answer only questions 17-19 on page 7.

8. How old are you? (Please circle)

16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+

9. What is your gender? (Please circle)

Male Female Prefer not to say

10. Do you have any health problems or disabilities that you expect will last for more than a year? (Please circle)

Yes No

11. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong? (Please tick)

- White
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Other groups
- Prefer not to say

12. What is your full home postcode?

| | | | | | | |
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13. If there are children in your household, what are their ages? (please tick all that apply)

- Under 4
- 5-9 years old
- 10-14 years old
- 15-19 years old
- There are no children in my household

14. If there are children in your household, do any of them have any health problems or disabilities that you expect will last for more than a year? (Please circle)

Yes No Not applicable

15. Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present? (Please tick)

- Employee in a full-time or part-time job
- Self-employed full or part time
- On a government supported training programme (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship/ Training for Work)
- Full-time education at school, college or university
- Unemployed and available for work
- Permanently sick/disabled
- Wholly retired from work
- Looking after the home
- Doing something else

16. If you work, which of the following best describes where you work? (Please tick one)

- Outside of Buckinghamshire
- In Buckinghamshire
- In Buckinghamshire for Buckinghamshire County Council
- In Buckinghamshire for a service that is commissioned by Buckinghamshire County Council
- In Buckinghamshire for another public or voluntary sector organisation
- Prefer not to say

Please only answer the following questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation rather than as an individual.

17. Please indicate which category best describes your organisation.

- A private business
- A voluntary organisation
- A community group
- A public sector organisation
- Other (please specify): _____

18. Please indicate which category best describes where your organisation currently operates.

- Operating inside of Buckinghamshire
- Operating outside of Buckinghamshire
- Operating both inside and outside of Buckinghamshire

19. What is the name of your organisation?

Thank you for your time. We will share the results on our website at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Improving early help services for children and families in Buckinghamshire

Additional Information - September 2017

This document should sit alongside the main consultation document as it provides supplementary information only

To respond to the consultation visit

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp>

You said, we're listening

We are now mid-way through our consultation on improving early help services for children and families. Thank you to those of you who have already replied. Feedback so far shows that more detail about the proposal would be useful. So we have added further information about the current services and how these would change with the proposed new service.

If you have already responded but now wish to add more, please complete the survey again. Responses already sent in will still be included. **The consultation will now close on 16 October 2017 to allow as much time as possible for responses.**

To save the council money we would encourage you to give your feedback online at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp. You can also complete the survey online in one of our libraries.

The Proposal

The original consultation document outlines the proposal for a new Early Help service that will:

- support families earlier, so their circumstances improve quicker and problems don't become too difficult to manage
- give families the tools to help them solve their own problems and also be more resilient in the future – so they know where they can go for help when they need it

To do this, we plan to bring together all the people who work with children and young people aged 0 - 19, and their families, in those early days when problems are getting tough, by creating one service: the Early Help Service.

Doing this will mean changes

We propose to redesign and bring together many of our services which provide help to children, young people and families in those early stages of a problem. This will involve changes to existing early help services we currently deliver or commission. The affected services are:

- The **Buckinghamshire Family Information Service**, an information service for families with children aged 0 - 19 and professionals through a website, social media and phone. www.bucksfamilyinfo.org
- Advice and support on education, employment and training options for young people aged 13 - 19 through **Connexions** (Adviza). They offer mentoring and support for young people.
- **Early Help coordinators** who co-ordinate referrals from families, partners and Children's Social Care for Early Help services through regular multi-agency panels.
- **Families First** supports the whole family across all age groups, covering all the issues they face making a difference and building their resilience so that they can cope when problems occur in the future.
- The **Family Resilience service (FRS)** work with children, young people aged 0 - 19 and their families who need support but do not need the help of social care. They deal with all the issues a family faces, through direct work and through the coordination of other agencies. Family help is provided in family homes and community settings. They also deliver a range of parenting and other support group programmes.

- **Support for children who have lived with Domestic Violence** through Women's Aid. They provide group work and 1 to 1 support for children living in temporary accommodation as well as supporting primary school aged children overcome the trauma of having lived with domestic violence.
- **Support for parents through Barnardo's** who train and co-ordinate volunteers to support families with at least one child under 8. Volunteers go into homes or temporary accommodation and provide advice and practical support with parenting, networking, accessing benefits and services
- **Support for young carers** aged 6 - 18 through volunteers and paid workers who provide one to one work and activities that allow them to take a break from their caring responsibilities.
- The **Youth Service** work with young people aged 11 to 19 (or 25 for those with additional needs) to provide informal personal and social, education and information support and guidance. They provide specific support through 1 to 1 and small group work to allow young people to learn from their peers and develop the skills needed to move successfully into adulthood. They also provide street based youth work; this often takes place in areas of deprivation and/or rural areas and/or where there is anti-social behaviour.

There are currently 3 youth centres run by the Youth Service across the county in the following locations (hyperlink to BFIS):

Youthspace Aylesbury
 Youthspace Wycombe
 The Roundhouse, High Wycombe

- **Children's Centres** provide a mixture of activities for all families with children under 5 as well as more specific support for families who need more help. This work supports other services such as the Family Resilience Service and Children's Social Care and includes programmes and individual support on parenting issues for families in their homes. The centres are also used by other agencies to deliver their services, including health visitors, midwives, Jobcentre Plus and some voluntary agencies.

There are currently 35 Children's Centres and 2 satellite centres in the following locations.

| Aylesbury | Smaller towns and rural areas |
|--|--|
| Elmhurst Children's Centre | Amersham Children's Centre |
| Southcourt) Children's Centre | Marlow Children's Centre |
| Quarrendon) Children's Centre | Beaconsfield Children's Centre |
| Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre | Ivinghoe and Pitstone Children's Centre, |
| Wendover Children's Centre | Risborough Children's Centre |

| | |
|---|---|
| Bearbrook Children's Centre | Burnham Children's Centre |
| Chesham | Denham and Gerrard's Cross Children's Centre |
| Newtown) Children's Centre | Prestwood and Missenden Children's Centre |
| Waterside) Children's Centre | Stokenchurch and Hambledon Valley Children's Centre |
| High Wycombe | The Ivers Children's Centre |
| Castlefield) Children's Centre | Bourne End and Wooburn Green Children's Centre |
| Hamilton Road Children's Centre | Steeple Claydon Children's Centre |
| Millbrook Children's Centre | Buckingham Children's Centre |
| Hazelmere and Loudwater Children's Centre | Wing Children's Centre |
| Disraeli) Children's Centre | Haddenham Children's Centre |
| East) Children's Centre | Chalfont Children's Centre |
| Abbey/ Mapledean) Children's Centre | Waddesdon and Whitchurch Children's Centre |
| Hampden Way) Children's Centre | Stokenchurch and Hambledon Valley (Satellite) |
| | Marlow Children's Centre (Satellite) |
| | Farnham Children's Centre - Lane End (Satellite) |

Creating a new Early Help service will mean changes to all of these services.

What will be different with a new Early Help service?

With less money there is a need to move away from services for all to more targeted services for those who need our help the most, focusing on support for the whole family. We have also been reviewing how we deliver Early Help services in a more joined up and coordinated way which was highlighted by Ofsted in 2014 as a key area for improvement.

Almost all of our current early help services focus on either a specific issue or age group which means families will often be getting help from a number of different teams and organisations.

- We will bring together all these services providing early help support to children and families into one service.
- We will create Early Help teams of family workers based in the communities where the families who need support live.
- There will be nine Early Help bases, located in the areas where we know we are needed the most. We have looked at the families and children we currently work with and considered future housing growth to identify the best locations.

Whilst demand for services is across the county, two thirds of children and families who need our support are in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other large towns such as Chesham. The remaining third is spread across smaller towns and rural areas. We need to be able to support families living in large towns but also be able to go out to families in rural areas.

Some of these bases could be located in existing Children's Centres or in other local community venues. We will take into account to the accessibility of buildings when deciding on the locations.

- The Early Help bases will provide targeted support. Families will be invited to activities or one to one support and these bases will be used to offer group sessions such as parenting courses and partner led sessions (for example, breastfeeding support run by health visitors) for those who need this support. Other group sessions may be run in other community settings, such as schools or village halls, depending on the demand. In the proposed new service, there will not be a 'drop in' option at the new Early Help bases for families.
- The Early Help bases will give the teams space to work with groups of families on specific issues but their main focus will be to go out into the community and schools where the people who need us are.
- These nine Early Help bases will replace the current Children's Centres and other early help services, bringing together professionals working with children and families in the early stages of a problem. Currently Children's Centre opening hours and the services that they offer is varied. There is not a consistent service across the county, centres are not always in the right places and they only provide services for families with children under the age of 5. Other early help services are structured around specific issues or age groups and therefore don't support the whole family. We know problems affect everyone in the family so treating them on their own doesn't always work in the long term.
- We know that some children and families use some of the current services for more social activities such as "stay and play" sessions, toddler groups and youth clubs. These activities are already widely available across the county and we will continue to signpost people to these and other services that we know are still needed and are popular. There may be opportunities in some locations for community groups or parish councils to become involved.

What types of support will be offered by a new Early Help service?

We will aim to provide practical, family centred and intensive, consent based support for families. Support can be provided to the whole family, children and young people within the family, or to groups of families who have the same problems.

The support will be agreed with the family, and be based on what their needs are. We will continue to learn from families and from local and national research as to what works best to help families.

Some examples of what could be provided include:

- How to build better relationships within the family
- What works to improve children's behaviour
- Understanding and managing children with special educational or physical needs
- How to be safe – for children and for parents
- How to be the best parent you can be
- Benefits and work, including CV preparation and interview training
- Advice on housing problems
- Budget management
- Debt counselling/advice
- Cooking healthy meals on a budget
- Support with applications for food banks/charitable grants
- Advice and support on finding childcare
- Advice and support with positive activities – for children, young people and whole family
- Practical support for a clean, safe home
- Help to talk to other professionals better – including schools
- School attendance
- Attending appointments with family members (e.g. health appointments)
- Bringing together the wider family to solve problems

Some examples of what group sessions could include:

- Parenting courses
- Freedom Programme (for Domestic Abuse)
- Young parents groups
- Workshops around volunteering, job applications and interview skills
- Groups for parents of children/young people who self-harm
- Keeping safe – a group for children/young people
- Parents and children group, supporting the development of positive relationships
- Mindfulness group work with parents, for those that are socially isolated/vulnerable
- Life skills course – how to manage your own life and build your skills

How will I be able to access early help services going forward?

The aim of a new Early Help service is to bring together services for children and families and work as one to make it simpler and easier for families. This means they will only have one lead worker who will bring in additional expertise if needed.

As the centres will not operate on a drop in basis, the main route will be via a central phone number and website for families and professionals. Information and advice

will also be available about activities in Buckinghamshire for children, young people and families.

Activities, information, advice and support for families and children from 0-19 can be found at www.bucksfamilyinfo.org . As part of our plans, we will be developing this website and information to be even better in the future.

We have looked at how this works across the country and considered other options

This model of Early Help service for children and families is already working well in many other parts of the country. We have gathered knowledge and research from these areas to help us develop how we think it could work best here in Buckinghamshire.

We have listened to the views of children and families that we work with to create a service that will meet their needs best and will listen carefully to the responses gathered through this consultation.

We have been working with a number of families in a similar way in Buckinghamshire for a few years through the Family Resilience Service and the Families First project. We want to use this experience and knowledge to benefit all families in Buckinghamshire.

We considered three other options before reaching the proposal for a new service. These were:

1. To keep all existing commissioned and in house early help services in their current format but reduce all budgets equally. Whilst fair, this would mean that some services would no longer be able to run to their current level and would impact on their ability to support children and families.
2. To keep only those services able to demonstrate effectiveness and good results for children and families they are working with and close others not doing this. Services provided would be most effective in supporting children and families but would mean the removal of a number of services and could put some children and families at risk and in the long term could increase demand on more costly social care services
3. To keep and bring together all County Council early help services and stop all early help services we pay others to run. This would be a relatively simple process and would retain council employees. However, this would mean the removal of a number of services impacting the breadth of support available and could potentially increase demand on more costly social care services in the future.

We recommend that developing a new service will create new opportunities and better benefits for children and families. A new service would provide the best value for money and the best opportunity to improve outcomes and reduce demand on children's social care and education services. This would give us the opportunity to bring together the skills and expertise across current early help services and provide a more seamless and joined up approach to working with families as a whole as opposed to individual problems or age groups. This option, based on emerging national best practice, has therefore been developed and is the proposal for a new Early Help service for Buckinghamshire.

To give your feedback to our proposals for a new Early Help service please go to www.bucksc.gov.uk/earlyhelp - closing date **16 October 2017**



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Title: | The Educational Psychology Service Action Plan |
| Committee date: | Tuesday 5 September 2017 |
| Author: | Craig Tribe – Principal Educational Psychologist |
| Contact officer: | Craig Tribe. ctribe@buckscc.gov.uk |
| Cabinet Member sign-off: | Cllr Mike Appleyard |

Purpose of Agenda Item

1.1 This paper provides an update to Select Committee following the previous Educational Psychology Service (EPS) paper tabled last year.

Background and Context

2.1 Like many Local Authorities across the country, Buckinghamshire's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is currently experiencing a number of challenges in regards to delivery of services to vulnerable children and young people (CYP). These stem from two key factors.

2.2 Firstly, there have been a number of significant factors directly derived from the revised Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015). This had the following direct impact on the EPS, including;

2.2.1 Increasing in population age range from 5-18 to 0-25 leading to an increase in the potential cohort of CYP with SEN requiring Educational Psychology involvement, specifically in requests for 'Education, Health and Care Plans' (EHCPs).

2.2.2 The new requirement to undertake a 'Transfer Conversion' for all eligible CYP with existing Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) by March 31st 2018. All Statements of SEN need to be 'converted' into Education, Health and Care Plans.



2.2.3 The broadening of the potential scope for EHCP requests and requests to contribute towards Annual Reviews of EHCPs to a wider proportion of the population (e.g. early years children and post 16 young people).

2.3 Secondly, there have been a number of significant profession and service related factors that have affected the ability to deliver education psychology (EP) services effectively and which have been evidenced and described in previous reports, including:

2.3.1 A national shortage of Educational Psychologists (EPs)

2.3.2 High competition between Local Authorities for prospective Educational Psychology (EP) candidates

2.3.2 High statutory demands and reduction in the range of services Educational Psychologists engaged in providing Early SEN Support and prevention work.

2.3.4 Increasing reliance on Locum EPs at a significant additional cost compared to retained EPs (average +30% per annum).

3. Key issues

Staffing and recruitment

3.1 The above factors have resulted in an increase in staff turnover in Buckinghamshire and a shortage of retained Educational Psychologists. This shortage is currently being backfilled by locum Educational Psychologists.

3.2 The Educational Psychology Service budget has remained at the same level for the previous two years, however the current high demand for statutory services has meant that nearly all current EPs are focused on statutory assessments, conversions, tribunals and Early Years SEN 'CHSU5' work and very little capacity is engaged in early intervention and prevention work.

3.3 Currently, the statutory demands require a greater amount of EP capacity than is currently budgeted and staffed. Currently, additional funding of £200k via the 'SEN Reforms Grant' has been provided in order to engage further EP capacity, however recruiting additional EPs is proving challenging given the current national context.

3.4 Table below shows current funding in place to support frontline EP service provision:

| | Statutory and Link EP funded budget (derived from BCC+DSG**) | Funded 'Front line' retained EP Establishment (FTE) less Business Support Services/ Management costs / Corporate overheads |
|---------|--|--|
| 2014/15 | £1,404,324 | 16.4 |
| 2015/16 | £1,345,984 | 15.3 |
| 2016/17 | £1,345,984 (+ £200,000*) | 15.3 (+ 2.8*) |

*Additional funding currently used to pay the additional costs of employing locum EPs.

**Additional funding has been provided previously for specific projects, however only an additional

£100k is provided currently for Nurture and Holding Hands projects via DSG.



3.5 The table below shows the current breakdown of frontline EPS staffing provision (retained Senior EPs, EPs and locums):

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Senior EPs | 2.4 FTE |
| Main Grade EPs | 9.6 FTE |
| Locum EPs | 4.0 FTE |

3.6 In summary, the EPS has an overall funding for retained staffing capacity of 17.0 FTE via a combination of retained EP capacity of 13.0FTE and an additional 4.0 FTE of locum capacity.

3.7 Given the additional costs of engaging locum EPs (+30% of that of retained EPs), the reliance on locum EPs to provide services places pressure on the additional funding provided via the SEN Reforms Grant.

Current and ongoing service demands

3.8 The EPS has experienced significant increases in statutory work (including statutory assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans, Transfer Conversions of Statements of SEN, Tribunals and Early Years CHSU5 notifications).

3.9 Because of the often complex nature of the work an assessment typically takes two days to complete from start to end. Assessments are 'holistic' in nature and aim to assimilate a wide range of contextual information relating to a child or young person's SEN. The complexity of many children and young people's context, and the range of potential professionals involved in their support, means that EPs will always seek to ensure a high quality, accurate and evidence based assessment is undertaken. Tribunal cases are often the most complex and demanding, both in terms of assessment rigour, but also in terms of time required to liaise with all stakeholder and attend hearings. A tribunal typically requires up to 5 days of EP time, however some maybe longer where multiple hearings are required.

3.10 The table below shows the overall assessment demands. There is currently a backlog of EHCP assessments and Conversions. Tribunals and CHSU5's are responded to as required and Transfer Conversions currently replace Annual Reviews of EHCPs. The FTE EP capacity required to clear all backlogs by 31 March 2018 is shown together with the annual number of assessments typically received by type:

| Assessment Type | Current Backlog | FTE required to clear by Mar 31st | Ongoing Annual Average / Required FTE |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| EHCP Assessment | 130 cases | 6.5 FTE | 550 cases / 7.0 FTE |
| Conversion | 500 cases* | 14.5 FTE | N/A. |
| Tribunal | N/A | | 40 cases / 1.0 FTE |
| Early Years CHSU5 | N/A | | 130 cases / 1.5 FTE |
| Annual Reviews | N/A | | 400 cases / 4.5 FTE |
| TOTAL | | 21.0FTE | 14.5 FTE |

*Projected number requiring EP involvement Oct '17-Mar '18.

3.11 In summary, in order to successfully complete all backlog statutory work the EPS requires an additional 3.0FTE EPs is required above the existing 17.0FTE Retained and locum EP establishment.

3.12 As a result of staffing shortfall and demand, current EPS performance for completion of assessments within the 20-week statutory timescale is low. The current performance and corresponding performance targets are set out below:

| | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Target |
|--------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Target | | | 10% | 20% | 40% | 40% | 60% | 80% | 80% | 100% |
| Actual | 8.7% | 9.0% | 9.6% | | | | | | | |

3.13 Key actions currently being undertaken to address staff recruitment issues and increase performance are set out in the relevant section below.

Re-establishing early intervention and prevention

3.14 It is recognised that there is a need to ensure EP capacity is re-focused onto the early intervention and prevention activities in order to support the effective management of statutory demands. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure other partner agencies across education are similarly focusing on effective early intervention and prevention activities in order to ensure the right support in put in place for the right children and young people at the right time.

3.15 A pilot programme is currently under development with the primary aim of ensuring robust and appropriate early education support. Key to this is the reinstatement of a 'Link EP' to all education settings across the county. Further details of this are set out in the relevant section below.

3.16 It is anticipated that the implementation of 'co-production' of outcomes within EHCPs directly with children and young people, parents and carers and other professionals will reduce likelihood of potential tribunal hearings and costly EP time attending associated hearings.

4. Summary of key actions and associated costs

Staffing and recruitment

4.1 Two FTE Retained EPs recruited for this academic year. In the interim the equivalent of four FTE Locum EPs have been engaged over the last 18 months.

4.2 Recruitment and Retention Package for EPs. This has been implemented in order to both retain existing EPs and attract new recruits to the Service. This has been in place for one year, with positive results (only one leaver and 4 new EP recruits over a 12 month period (two started and two joining us in September 2017)).

4.3. Introduced a multi-platform recruitment initiative in order to attract a wider range of potential candidates to apply for a post in Buckinghamshire. This is being broadened to include an enhanced 'recruitment drive' including:

4.3.1 Review of current recruitment campaign by Insight Team

4.3.2 Revised recruitment content to include 'talking heads' videos by Director of Education and Executive Director, case studies and 'thinkpieces' to promote working in Buckinghamshire's EPS.

4.3.3 'Open Evening' in geographically central location (London) to attract prospective employees.

4.3.4 Maintained a focus on a 'grow our own' programme for EP recruitment, including;

- Maintenance of two Psychology Assistant (PA) posts designed to lead the post holders on places on a Doctorate in Educational Psychology training course.
- Maintenance of 4 Trainee EP training placements for Year 2/3 Trainee EPs. Interventions have had positive results as 3 out of the previous 4 EPs recruited having passed through the 'PA' and Trainee route.

4.4 Additional costs associated with actions above:

4.4.1 £200,000 to provide 3.0FTE additional EPs above the 17FTE currently employed in order to meet ongoing demands and address backlog. This would provide a total of 22FTE EPs and would enable the EPS to reinstate Link EP services as well as manage ongoing statutory demands.

4.4.2 £25k to undertake recruitment drive as set out above.

Early intervention and prevention

4.5 Improved working practices between EPS and SEN Team, resulting in better coordination of priorities and understanding of demands. SEN colleagues are working closely with EPS in order to ensure only highest priority Transfer Conversions require EP involvement.

4.6 A more child and family centred approach is under development, including;

- Co-ordinated joint assessments of SEND between Education, Health and Cares Services;
- Co-production of outcomes for EHCPs between Education, Health and Care Services.

4.7 Strengthening of Early SEN Support in order to manage the number of statutory request received. Several initiatives underway, including development and implementation of:

- Graduated Approach and associated supporting documentation for schools and settings;
- Repositioning EP / SENO engagement prior to the statutory process in order to ensure only the most appropriate statutory requests are received;
- Engagement of wider support services in provision of support prior to statutory assessment being requested.

4.8 SEN Pilot programme under development in order to re-establish early intervention and prevention service activity. Briefly, the Pilot will involve the engagement of an additional 2.0FTE EPs in order to facilitate the re-establishment of 'Link EP' capacity to education settings in order to support the following:

4.7.1 Work with identified schools to understand the needs of the cohort of children with emerging SEN, SEN Support and existing children with EHCP's

4.7.2 Ensure all SEN support children are registered and their SEN Support Plans are effective

4.7.3 Provide advice and support to schools to ensure the Graduated Approach has been fully implemented, and ensure appropriate advice from specialists has been sought and acted upon at the earliest stage

4.7.4 Attend cluster meetings of professionals/family to discuss individual cases where Graduated Approach has been completed but an EHCP is not required

4.7.5 Collaborate, alongside other professionals in the design and implementation of bespoke packages to support children's needs in mainstream settings

4.7.6 Advise on when an EHC assessment is required and ensure the new 20 week process is adhered to.

4.8 Additional capacity costs in order to achieve actions above:

4.8.1 £150k for two main grade EPs to support the service in re-establishing the early SEN 'Link EP' support.

5 Summary

5.1 The Educational Psychology Service has experienced unprecedented challenges over the last few years in terms of staff retention and service demands. The effects of this have been seen in poor performance against key performance indicators (20-week statutory completion rates). This has led, in turn, to the re-focusing of service delivery in order to respond to statutory demands.

5.2 In order to accelerate the improvement process, additional locum EP support is being engaged in order to enable the existing Conversion and ongoing statutory assessment demands to be met with increasing success. Additional Locum EP capacity has been identified (starting September 2017). This, combined with the new EPs recruited will assist the improvement process. Additionally, private organisations have also been re-approached to see if they could provide additional capacity to meet current demand. Based on projected staffing levels, Key Performance Indicators have been set for the EPS over the coming months in order to monitor progress.

5.3 A number of additional actions have been implemented in order to mitigate against further service under performance, including, a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention pay package and engagement and refreshed recruitment drive.

5.4 Further, strategic developments are also underway in order to strengthen BCC's Early SEN Support, focusing on establishing positive and supportive relationships with CYP, their parents / carers and school / educational settings earlier on prior to a request being made via the SEN Pilot and re-establishment of 'Link EP' role.

5.5 In order to achieve this, the EPS must maintain a focus on elimination of the outstanding accumulation of assessments, increase the 20-week completion rate for new assessments and complete all conversions within statutory timescales.

5.6 It is recognised that the EPS requires additional staffing capacity in order to achieve the actions set out above, and that this additional capacity will require additional resourcing.





Buckinghamshire County Council
Children's Social Care and Learning
Select Committee

Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Title: | Quarter 1 2017/18 Corporate Performance Report – Children's Service and Education and Skills Portfolio. |
| Committee date: | 17 th October 2017 |
| Author: | Jo Sage, Head of Insight and Business Improvement |
| Contact officer: | Jo Sage, Head of Insight and Business Improvement – josage@buckscc.gov.uk |
| Cabinet Member(s): | Cllr. Warren Whyte and Cllr. Mike Appleyard |

Purpose of Agenda Item

For the Committee to consider and discuss the Council's quarterly performance report in respect of the Children's Services and Education and Skills portfolios for quarter 1 2017/18. It comprises:

- A summary report for Children's Services (Appendix 1)
- An appendix of Children's Services Measures (Appendix 2)
- A summary report for Education and Skills (Appendix 3)
- An appendix of Education and Skills Measures (Appendix 4)

The summary reports (appendix 1 and 3) highlight the key areas of good performance as well as all areas requiring improvement for each Portfolio.

Appendices 2 and 4 are a detailed list of measures regarding progress in achieving the priorities as detailed in the Strategic Plan.

Please note that data for the majority of attainment measures for 2017 within the Education and Skills portfolio will be available later in the year and will be reported to the Committee in due course.





Total number of measures with a RAG (shown in chart above):
 Measures where data currently unavailable:

17
0

► Key areas of good performance

| Measure | Target | Current position | RAG | Benchmarking | Commentary |
|--|----------------------|------------------|-------|--|---|
| 1 % of Children in Need (CIN) reviewed in time (not including Child Protection, Children Looked After) | 100% (15% tolerance) | 86% | Green | The % of children in need reviewed in timescale is above the tolerance target of 85%. Benchmarking information is not currently available. Note: There is a 15% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (85-100% = Green, less than 85% = Amber, less than 76.5% = Red). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team Managers are quality assuring all CIN plans in supervision and prior to all CIN reviews 2. New CIN structure is allowing Social Workers time to spend with families to ensure interventions are meaningful 3. The restructure has enabled the SWs in teams to focus on CIN plans – reduction of children on CLA and CP plans have supported this. 4. Reviews of children on plans over six months is being embedded – Team Manager’s review and send to Performance Improvement Manager. 5. The teams are consciously aware of the importance of SMART timescales and managers QA and review all plans. 6. Plans that need improvement are sent back and SWs supported in supervision. 7. ASYEs – CIN practice standards are met as a part of their ongoing development. 8. Continued focus on the CIN improvement plan is revisited by managers in team meetings. 9. Ongoing focus and improvements made in the teams in response to ongoing Ofsted monitoring visits. |
| 2 % of children who became the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time | 18% | 17% | Green | The % of children starting on a second or subsequent CP plan is within target and is lower than our Statistical Neighbours (18%), the South East (21%) and England (18%). | Performance remains consistently good in this area evidencing the sustained improvements in SMART child protection plans, and children remaining on a plan for the right amount of time. The Child Protection Conference Service has been a stable team for the last year which has assisted in maintaining good performance. |
| 3 % of care leavers in suitable accommodation | 78% | 93% | Green | The % of care leavers in suitable accommodation is above target and is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (78%), the South East (77%) and England (83%). | We sustain a high percentage of our care leavers in suitable accommodation because there is a Housing Protocol which was developed by the Aftercare Manager with the District Councils which allows Care Leavers’ status to be escalated to give them some priority on the housing register. We have developed 4 studios in Aylesbury which is a step down accommodation for 18 year olds waiting to bid for their own tenancy. This facility is cost neutral as is paid for by the young people’s Housing Benefit. There is a reasonable range of supporting living e.g. YMCA, Stonham and Padstones in Buckinghamshire which supports semi-independent living. We only use B&B as a last resort – currently only 7 out of a cohort of 205 are using B&B . We do help young people to source privately rented accommodation if they are living away from Buckinghamshire and have no local connection allowing them to bid for housing. |

► All areas of lower than expected performance (Red or Amber)

| Measure | Target | Current position | RAG | Benchmarking | Commentary |
|---|----------------------|------------------|-------|---|---|
| 1 % repeat referrals | 20% | 30% | Red | The % of repeat referrals is over target (good to be low) and is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (20%), the South East (24%) and England (22%). | The Business Intelligence unit are currently undertaking extensive research into this area. Auditing of children's assessments that have 'No Further Action' status is being undertaken by the First Response Head of Service and Early Help Head of Service. Domestic violence has been identified as a theme for repeat audits – specialist training in this area (DASH) was commissioned for the majority of the social workers in the assessment teams and was completed in June 2017. |
| 2 % assessments completed in 45 working days | 100% (14% tolerance) | 81% | Amber | The % of assessments completed within the 45 day statutory timescale is 5% below the tolerance target of 86% and is performing similarly to our Statistical Neighbours (86%), the South East (83%) and England (83%). Note: There is a 14% tolerance against the target of 100% to align with Statistical Neighbour performance (86%-100% = Green, less than 86% = Amber, less than 77.4% = Red). | Between April 2016 and February 2017 this has consistently been above 90%, but has dropped to 81% for the last 3 months due to higher than average caseloads. To address this we have recruited to two additional permanent posts and three temporary posts, and have embedded a more rigorous process of monitoring, review and audit. In addition Early Help Services are being strengthened to meet families' needs at the right time which will reduce pressure on social care service services and the subsequent volume of assessments. |
| 3 % ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference) held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion | 100% (18% tolerance) | 57% | Red | The % of ICPCs held within the 15 day statutory timescale from the Strategy Discussion is 25% below the tolerance target of 82% and is also performing below our Statistical Neighbours (82%), the South East (72%) and England (77%). Note: There is a 18% tolerance against the target of 100% to align with Statistical Neighbour performance (82%-100% = Green, less than 82% = Amber, less than 73.8% = Red). | Performance improved significantly in June following a review of processes to enable timely submission of requests for ICPCs. This trend in improvement is set to continue through July with close monitoring and swift escalation to reduce the risk of conferences not being held in time. |
| 4 % of Children in Need (not including CP, CLA) seen in the last 6 weeks | 100% (5% tolerance) | 90% | Amber | The % of Children in Need seen in the last 6 weeks is 5% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not available. Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions for this indicator where a child cannot be seen for legitimate reasons (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red). | Since the new Children In Need service was launched in Feb 2017 we have seen a marked improvement in Children in Need being seen on a regular basis. Most children are visited on a more regular basis which will continue in the future. |
| 5 % of Child Protection Plans reviewed in timescales | 100% (5% tolerance) | 88% | Amber | The % of children on CP plans reviewed in timescale is 7% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not currently available. Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red). | Performance has fluctuated slightly over the past 3 months: April (87%), May (93%), June (88%). Child Protection/Court service has seen a number of Social Worker changes which has led to some Plans being reviewed outside timescale . Plan: 1. Recruit to Social Worker vacancies in Child Protection/Court 2. Review performance with Team Managers to ascertain if there are any common themes besides vacancy issues |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------|-----|-------|--|--|
| 6 | % Children Looked After (CLA) seen in the last 6 weeks | 100% (5% tolerance) | 93% | Amber | The % of looked after children seen in the last 6 weeks is 2% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not available. Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions for this indicator where a child cannot be seen for legitimate reasons (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red). | There has been a restructure of the service during June which may have had an impact on performance. The Care Service are monitoring visits to children closely and to review against the twice weekly Caseload Reports to ensure children are seen within timescales. |
| 7 | % of CLA (Children Looked After) have their reviews completed on time | 100% (5% tolerance) | 88% | Amber | The % of looked after children reviewed in timescale is 7% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not currently available. Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red). | 5 reviews were out of timescale because of staff absence due to illness. Reviews were rescheduled and picked up by other Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) but prior commitments meant 5 reviews were 2-5 days out of timescale. |
| 8 | % of CLA living within 20 miles of home | 56% | 36% | Red | The % of children placed within 20 miles from their home address is 20% below target. Our performance around this is significantly below our Statistical Neighbours (62%), the South East (63%) and England (74%), however there are a number of children's records within LCS which are not reflecting their distance from home correctly. These children's records have now been amended since the end of the quarter and the performance as at 19th July was 53%. | There is better accuracy in the recording into LCS which has corrected blank entries to actual distances. Of the 45 children who entered care (and still remain in care) since April, 73% were placed within 20 miles from home. Stronger relationships have been built with local providers leading to better utilisation of in-house placements. |
| 9 | % of children in care placed with own provision (non-kinship) | 24% | 16% | Red | The % of looked after children placed with an in-house foster carer is 8% below target and 28% below our comparative CIPFA neighbours (44%) - Source: CLA CIPFA report 2016 | The growth in internal fostering will occur during the second, third and fourth quarters, with 14 additional fostering families becoming approved by panel. There is ongoing scrutiny and analysis of utilisation of internal foster placements. The placement team has moved to be situated alongside the fostering teams in order to improve utilisation and communication. |
| 10 | % of children waiting <14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family | 100% | 67% | Red | The % of children waiting under 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 33% below target. Benchmarking information is not currently available - awaiting publication of the latest National Adoption Scorecard. The measure has changed nationally from 16 to 14 months, therefore once benchmarking data is available there is potential to align the target with our Statistical Neighbours. | The timescale from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption can be delayed for 3 reasons: a) there is a delay in starting care proceedings b) care proceedings take longer than 26 weeks usually due to the complexity of the case c) where a child with a Placement Order takes longer to place due to their particular needs, i.e., age, disability, health or because they are part of a larger sibling group making them 'hard to place' . There were just 3 children placed April – June 2017 with one child outside the 14 month timescale. This child was placed immediately after the Placement Order was granted; however there had been protracted care proceedings which included periods of residential assessment. In the past year the authority has been addressing all 3 areas primarily through a more robust monitoring and oversight of plans and timescales and through a closer working relationship between the family finders and the children's teams. However, given there are fewer children we are likely to see fluctuations over the year, it is also notable that we currently have several harder to place children and sibling groups that will be more difficult to place quickly. |

- Vulnerable children are safe and protected from harm

► Quality

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|---------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 % repeat referrals | Low | Month only (not quarterly data) | 20% | 30% | 30% | | | | Red | The % of repeat referrals is over target (good to be low) and is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (20%), the South East (24%) and England (22%). | The Business Intelligence unit are currently undertaking extensive research into this area. Auditing of children's assessments that have 'No Further Action' status is being undertaken by the First Response Head of Service and Early Help Head of Service. Domestic violence has been identified as a theme for repeat audits – specialist training in this area (DASH) was commissioned for the majority of the social workers in the assessment teams and was completed in June 2017. |
| 2 % of children who became the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time | Low | Month only (not quarterly data) | 18% | New | 17% | | | | Green | The % of children starting on a second or subsequent CP plan is within target and is lower than our Statistical Neighbours (18%), the South East (21%) and England (18%). | Performance remains consistently good in this area evidencing the sustained improvements in SMART child protection plans, and children remaining on a plan for the right amount of time. The Child Protection Conference Service has been a stable team for the last year which has assisted in maintaining good performance. |
| 3 % of children subject to a Child Protection Plan lasting 2 years or more | Low | Month only (not quarterly data) | 2% | 1% | 1% | | | | Green | The % of children subject to a CP Plan with a duration of 2yrs+ is within target and is lower than our Statistical Neighbours (2%), the South East (2%) and England (2%). | |
| 4 % of care leavers in suitable accommodation | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 78% | 90% | 93% | | | | Green | The % of care leavers in suitable accommodation is above target and is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (78%), the South East (77%) and England (83%). | We sustain a high percentage of our care leavers in suitable accommodation because there is a Housing Protocol which was developed by the Aftercare Manager with the District Councils which allows Care Leavers' status to be escalated to give them some priority on the housing register. We have developed 4 studios in Aylesbury which is a step down accommodation for 18 year olds waiting to bid for their own tenancy. This facility is cost neutral as is paid for by the young people's Housing Benefit. There is a reasonable range of supporting living e.g. YMCA, Stonham and Padstones in Buckinghamshire which supports semi-independent living. We only use B&B as a last resort – currently only 7 out of a cohort of 205 are using B&B. We do help young people to source privately rented accommodation if they are living away from Buckinghamshire and have no local connection allowing them to bid for housing. |
| 5 % of care leavers in employment, education, or training (EET) | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 47% | 64% | 65% | | | | Green | The % of care leavers in EET is above target and is higher than our Statistical Neighbours (47%), the South East (47%) and England (49%). | |

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► Voice of the child

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary | |
|---------|--|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|--|---|
| 6 | % of Children in Need (not including CP, CLA) seen in the last 6 weeks | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (5% tolerance) | New Definition | 90% | | | | Amber | <p>The % of Children in Need seen in the last 6 weeks is 5% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions for this indicator where a child cannot be seen for legitimate reasons (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red).</p> | <p>Since the new Children In Need service was launched in Feb 2017 we have seen a marked improvement in Children in Need being seen on a regular basis. Most children are visited on a more regular basis which will continue in the future.</p> |
| 7 | % of children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan seen in the last 4 weeks | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (5% tolerance) | 95% | 95% | | | | Green | <p>The % of children on a CP plan seen in the last 4 weeks is on the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions for this indicator where a child cannot be seen for legitimate reasons (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red).</p> | <p>1. The CP court service regularly monitors performance of children seen against an internal 10 working day (2 week) target. Positive performance within 10 working days has a direct impact on the 20 working day (4 week) statutory target.</p> <p>2. Team Managers provide weekly reports on visits to children to the Safeguarding Head of Service for oversight and challenge.</p> <p>3. The Head of Service and Practice Improvement Managers also review visit performance monthly and make appropriate resource changes if any team has a dip in performance.</p> <p>4. The Safeguarding Service restructure has enabled Social Workers in the CP/Court Teams to prioritise visits to children on CP plans.</p> |
| 8 | % Children Looked After (CLA) seen in the last 6 weeks | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (5% tolerance) | 94% | 93% | | | | Amber | <p>The % of looked after children seen in the last 6 weeks is 2% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions for this indicator where a child cannot be seen for legitimate reasons (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red).</p> | <p>There has been a restructure of the service during June which may have had an impact on performance.</p> <p>The Care Service are monitoring visits to children closely and to review against the twice weekly Caseload Reports to ensure children are seen within timescales.</p> |

► Reviewing children's Plans

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| 9 % of Children in Need (CIN) reviewed in time (not including Child Protection, Children Looked After) | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (15% tolerance) | New Definition | 86% | | | | Green | <p>The % of children in need reviewed in timescale is above the tolerance target of 85%. Benchmarking information is not currently available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 15% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (85-100% = Green, less than 85% = Amber, less than 76.5% = Red).</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Team Managers are quality assuring all CIN plans in supervision and prior to all CIN reviews 2. New CIN structure is allowing Social Workers time to spend with families to ensure interventions are meaningful 3. The restructure has enabled the SWs in teams to focus on CIN plans – reduction of children on CLA and CP plans have supported this. 4. Reviews of children on plans over six months is being embedded – Team Manager's review and send to Performance Improvement Manager. 5. The teams are consciously aware of the importance of SMART timescales and managers QA and review all plans. 6. Plans that need improvement are sent back and SWs supported in supervision. 7. ASYEs – CIN practice standards are met as a part of their ongoing development. 8. Continued focus on the CIN improvement plan is revisited by managers in team meetings. 9. Ongoing focus and improvements made in the teams in response to ongoing Ofsted monitoring visits. |
| 10 71 % of Child Protection Plans reviewed in timescales | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (5% tolerance) | 96% | 88% | | | | Amber | <p>The % of children on CP plans reviewed in timescale is 7% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not currently available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red).</p> | <p>Performance has fluctuated slightly over the past 3 months: April (87%), May (93%), June (88%). Child Protection/Court service has seen a number of Social Worker changes which has led to some Plans being reviewed outside timescale .</p> <p>Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit to Social Worker vacancies in Child Protection/Court 2. Review performance with Team Managers to ascertain if there are any common themes besides vacancy issues |
| 11 % of CLA (Children Looked After) have their reviews completed on time | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (5% tolerance) | 96% | 88% | | | | Amber | <p>The % of looked after children reviewed in timescale is 7% below the tolerance target of 95%. Benchmarking information is not currently available.</p> <p>Note: There is a 5% tolerance against the target of 100% to allow for exceptions (95-100% = Green, less than 95% = Amber, less than 85.5% = Red).</p> | <p>5 reviews were out of timescale because of staff absence due to illness. Reviews were rescheduled and picked up by other Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) but prior commitments meant 5 reviews were 2-5 days out of timescale.</p> |

► Timeliness of the journey of the child

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|--|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 1.2 % assessments completed in 45 working days | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (14% tolerance) | 89% | 81% | | | | Amber | <p>The % of assessments completed within the 45 day statutory timescale is 5% below the tolerance target of 86% and is performing similarly to our Statistical Neighbours (86%), the South East (83%) and England (83%).</p> <p>Note: There is a 14% tolerance against the target of 100% to align with Statistical Neighbour performance (86%-100% = Green, less than 86% = Amber, less than 77.4% = Red).</p> | <p>Between April 2016 and February 2017 this has consistently been above 90%, but has dropped to 81% for the last 3 months due to higher than average caseloads.</p> <p>To address this we have recruited to two additional permanent posts and three temporary posts, and have embedded a more rigorous process of monitoring, review and audit.</p> <p>In addition Early Help Services are being strengthened to meet families' needs at the right time which will reduce pressure on social care service services and the subsequent volume of assessments.</p> |
| 1.3 % ICPC (Initial Child Protection Conference) held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 100% (18% tolerance) | 53% | 57% | | | | Red | <p>The % of ICPCs held within the 15 day statutory timescale from the Strategy Discussion is 25% below the tolerance target of 82% and is also performing below our Statistical Neighbours (82%), the South East (72%) and England (77%).</p> <p>Note: There is a 18% tolerance against the target of 100% to align with Statistical Neighbour performance (82%-100% = Green, less than 82% = Amber, less than 73.8% = Red).</p> | <p>Performance improved significantly in June following a review of processes to enable timely submission of requests for ICPCs. This trend in improvement is set to continue through July with close monitoring and swift escalation to reduce the risk of conferences not being held in time.</p> |

► Sufficiency of children's placements

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|---------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 14 % of CLA living within 20 miles of home | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 56% | 38% | 36% | | | | Red | The % of children placed within 20 miles from their home address is 20% below target. Our performance around this is significantly below our Statistical Neighbours (62%), the South East (63%) and England (74%), however there are a number of children's records within LCS which are not reflecting their distance from home correctly. These children's records have now been amended since the end of the quarter and the performance as at 19th July was 53%. | There is better accuracy in the recording into LCS which has corrected blank entries to actual distances. Of the 45 children who entered care (and still remain in care) since April, 73% were placed within 20 miles from home. Stronger relationships have been built with local providers leading to better utilisation of in-house placements. |
| 15 % of children in care placed with own provision (non-kinship) | High | Month only (not quarterly data) | 24% | 17% | 16% | | | | Red | The % of looked after children placed with an in-house foster carer is 8% below target and 28% below our comparative CIPFA neighbours (44%) - Source: CLA CIPFA report 2016 | The growth in internal fostering will occur during the second, third and fourth quarters, with 14 additional fostering families becoming approved by panel. There is ongoing scrutiny and analysis of utilisation of internal foster placements. The placement team has moved to be situated alongside the fostering teams in order to improve utilisation and communication. |
| 16 % of Children Looked After in residential care | Low | Month only (not quarterly data) | 10.0% | 10.7% | 10.0% | | | | Green | The % of looked after children placed in residential care is on target and in line with our comparative CIPFA neighbours (9%) - Source: CLA CIPFA report 2016 | |

73 Permanency for children

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Mar 2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|-----------------------|--------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| 17 % of children waiting <14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family | Low | Average, rolling year | 100% | 79% | 67% | | | | Red | The % of children waiting under 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 33% below target. Benchmarking information is not currently available - awaiting publication of the latest National Adoption Scorecard. The measure has changed nationally from 16 to 14 months, therefore once benchmarking data is available there is potential to align the target with our Statistical Neighbours. | <p>The timescale from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption can be delayed for 3 reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is a delay in starting care proceedings b) care proceedings take longer than 26 weeks usually due to the complexity of the case c) where a child with a Placement Order takes longer to place due to their particular needs, i.e., age, disability, health or because they are part of a larger sibling group making them 'hard to place'. <p>There were just 3 children placed April – June 2017 with one child outside the 14 month timescale. This child was placed immediately after the Placement Order was granted, however there had been protracted care proceedings which included periods of residential assessment.</p> <p>In the past year the authority has been addressing all 3 areas primarily through a more robust monitoring and oversight of plans and timescales and through a closer working relationship between the family finders and the children's teams. However, given there are fewer children we are likely to see fluctuations over the year, it is also notable that we currently have several harder to place children and sibling groups that will be more difficult to place quickly.</p> |

Total number of measures with a RAG (shown in chart above): 3
 Measures where data currently unavailable:

3
17

► Key areas of good performance

| Measure | Target | Current position | RAG | Benchmarking | Commentary |
|--|--------|------------------|-----|--------------|------------|
| 1 No indicators to report this quarter | | | | | |

► All areas of lower than expected performance (Red or Amber)

| Measure | Target | Current position | RAG | Benchmarking | Commentary |
|--|--------|------------------|-------|--|--|
| 1 % new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions) | 100.0% | 16.4% | Red | Data for this measure is reported as an accumulation for the calendar year, in line with national reporting. National results for 2016 = 56%, South East = 43%. | Continued staffing pressures in SEND / EPS services as well as increasing demand on the service is limiting resource to complete assessments and issue plans (4% increase in plan and statements maintained (142) between Jun 16 –Jun 17). Key challenges include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Psychology: Statutory Assessments for Educational Psychology – Appendix Ds (Part of EHCP process) completed within 6 weeks 13% (June). 1,565 statements of SEN remain for which we have a statutory responsibility to convert to EHC Plans by the end of March 2018. To address this the SEN Reforms Grant has been used to increase staffing levels to help manage demand and the SEND Improvement Plan is being implemented. This focuses on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficiency of Educational Placements for CYP and HNB funding. Early SEN Support - the roll out of the 'Graduated Approach' to all educational providers, with support from officers and Educational Psychologists to embed this as well as support with cases which need an application for an EHC Plan. Improvement and Integration of Services - the process is reviewed by professionals and families to restructure/integrate services to improve the experience for families and outcomes achieved. A Quality Assurance framework has been developed. |
| 2 % new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) | 100.0% | 16.4% | Red | Data for this measure is reported as an accumulation for the calendar year, in line with national reporting. National results for 2016 = 59%, South East = 43%. | As above |
| 3 % of pupils attending schools rated good and outstanding by Ofsted | 90.0% | 88.6% | Amber | National (31/12/2016) = 87% | Buckinghamshire results have risen slightly since last quarter and continue to be above the national average. There are currently 17 schools judged to be less than good: 11 'Requires Improvement (RI)' and 6 'Inadequate'. The LA monitors the performance of all its schools through dedicated 'Team around the School' meetings. The meetings are used to proactively identify schools causing concern, including those at risk of slipping into an Ofsted category. Intervention and support are put in place for those schools causing concern. Our main School Improvement provider is commissioned to provide targeted support for schools in Special Measures and RI schools. The LA also commissions targeted projects designed to support specific schools to improve outcomes for underperforming groups and works closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to support any schools graded inadequate by Ofsted, as well as other schools causing concern. As part of the Education Strategy a new Head Teacher reference group has been established with 15 HTs from across the different types of schools to drive a sustainable schools led model for school improvement. |

- Vulnerable children are supported to fulfil their potential

▶ Improving Education Standards for Disadvantaged Pupils

| | Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Last years outturn 2016 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|--|------------|---------------------|--------|-------------------------|------|------|------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Year 1 Phonics - expected standard gap between disadvantaged pupils % and others % | Low | Annual outturn only | 13% | 17% | 23% | 18% | 17% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 2 | Key Stage 2 - expected standard (reading, writing & maths) gap between disadvantaged pupils % and others % | Low | Annual outturn only | 22% | 24% | N/A | N/A | 24% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 3 | Key Stage 4 - Attainment 8 gap between disadvantaged pupils and others | Low | Annual outturn only | 12.3 | 13.9 | N/A | N/A | 13.9 | data not available | Not Available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 4 | Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - 'good level of development' gap between disadvantaged pupils % and others % | Low | Annual outturn only | 18% | 18% | 24% | 21% | 18% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |

▶ Improving Education for SEND Pupils

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| | Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Last years outturn 2016 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|--|------------|---------------------|--------|-------------------------|------|------|------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 5 | Key Stage 2 - % of pupils with a statement of SEN or EHCP reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics | High | Annual outturn only | 11% | 9% | N/A | N/A | 9% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 6 | Key Stage 4 - average Attainment 8 score for pupils with a statement of SEN or EHCP | High | Annual outturn only | 22.0 | 19.9 | N/A | N/A | 19.9 | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | 2016 calendar year | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|--|------------|-------------|--------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| % new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions) | High | Quarterly | 100.0% | 50.0% | 16.4% | | | | Red | <p>Data for this measure is reported as an accumulation for the calendar year, in line with national reporting.</p> <p>National results for 2016 = 56%, South East = 43%.</p> | <p>Continued staffing pressures in SEND / EPS services as well as increasing demand on the service is limiting resource to complete assessments and issue plans (4% increase in plan and statements maintained (142) between Jun 16 –Jun 17).</p> <p>Key challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Psychology: Statutory Assessments for Educational Psychology – Appendix Ds (Part of EHCP process) completed within 6 weeks 13% (June). • 1,565 statements of SEN remain for which we have a statutory responsibility to convert to EHC Plans by the end of March 2018. <p>To address this the SEN Reforms Grant has been used to increase staffing levels to help manage demand and the SEND Improvement Plan is being implemented. This focuses on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Educational Placements for CYP and HNB funding. • Early SEN Support - the roll out of the 'Graduated Approach' to all educational providers, with support from officers and Educational Psychologists to embed this as well as support with cases which need an application for an EHC Plan. • Improvement and Integration of Services - the process is reviewed by professionals and families to restructure/integrate services to improve the experience for families and outcomes achieved. A Quality Assurance framework has been developed. |
| % new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) | High | Quarterly | 100.0% | 51.0% | 16.4% | | | | Red | <p>Data for this measure is reported as an accumulation for the calendar year, in line with national reporting.</p> <p>National results for 2016 = 59%, South East = 43%.</p> | As above |

- Buckinghamshire young people achieve excellent results throughout their education

► Exclusions and Attendance

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Last years outturn 2016/2017 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|--|------------|---------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 9 Overall attendance rate - primary schools | High | Annual outturn only | 96.1% | 96.1% | 96.3% | 96.3% | 96.1% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 10 Overall attendance rate - secondary schools | High | Annual outturn only | 94.8% | 94.5% | 94.8% | 94.5% | 94.5% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 11 Permanent exclusion rate - primary | Low | Annual outturn only | 0.02% | 0.01% | data not available | 0.01% | data not available | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 12 Permanent exclusion rate - secondary | Low | Annual outturn only | 0.10% | 0.13% | 0.08% | 0.13% | data not available | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |

► Quality of schools

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Last years outturn 2016/2017 | Q1 Jun 2017 | Q2 Sep 2017 | Q3 Dec 2017 | Q4 Mar 2018 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|----------------------|--------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 79 % of pupils attending schools rated good and outstanding by Ofsted | High | Current quarter only | 90.0% | 88.0% | 88.6% | | | | Amber | National (31/12/2016) = 87% | <p>Buckinghamshire results have risen slightly since last quarter and continue to be above the national average. There are currently 17 schools judged to be less than good: 11 'Requires Improvement (RI)' and 6 'Inadequate'. The LA monitors the performance of all its schools through dedicated 'Team around the School' meetings. The meetings are used to proactively identify schools causing concern, including those at risk of slipping into an Ofsted category.</p> <p>Intervention and support are put in place for those schools causing concern. Our main School Improvement provider is commissioned to provide targeted support for schools in Special Measures and RI schools. The LA also commissions targeted projects designed to support specific schools to improve outcomes for underperforming groups and works closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to support any schools graded inadequate by Ofsted, as well as other schools causing concern. As part of the Education Strategy a new Head Teacher reference group has been established with 15 HTs from across the different types of schools to drive a sustainable schools led model for school improvement.</p> |

| Measure | Good to be | Data period | Target | Last years outturn 2016/2017 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Latest performance (RAG) | Benchmarks | Commentary |
|---|------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------------------|------|------|------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 14 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - % of pupils achieving a good level of development | High | Annual outturn only | 72% | 71% | 64% | 68% | 71% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 15 Year 1 Phonics - % of pupils reaching the expected standard | High | Annual outturn only | 83% | 81% | 72% | 77% | 81% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 16 Key Stage 1 - % of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading | High | Annual outturn only | 78% | 77% | N/A | N/A | 77% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 17 Key Stage 1 - % of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing | High | Annual outturn only | 68% | 65% | N/A | N/A | 65% | data not available | Not available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 18 Key Stage 1 - % of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics | High | Annual outturn only | 75% | 72% | N/A | N/A | 72% | data not available | Not Available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 19 Key Stage 2 - % of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics | High | Annual outturn only | 57% | 56% | N/A | N/A | 56% | data not available | Not Available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |
| 20 Key Stage 4 - average Attainment 8 score | High | Annual outturn only | 58.0 | 55.4 | N/A | N/A | 55.4 | data not available | Not Available | Data not yet available | Data not yet available |



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Title: | Independent Reviewing Officer Service |
| Committee date: | Tuesday 17 October 2017 |
| Author: | Tolis Vouyioukas, Executive Director |
| Contact officer: | Julie Davies, juliedavies@buckscc.gov.uk |
| Cabinet Member sign-off: | Warren Whyte |

Purpose of Agenda Item

The purpose of this report is to provide Select Committee with an up to date position with regards to the performance and progress of Buckinghamshire County Council's Independent Reviewing Officer Service.

Background

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service annual report for 2016/17 provides an overview of the progress of the service over the last year and impact on improving outcomes for children and young people, as required by statutory guidance (the Children Act 1989, Section 25B (1) and in the IRO handbook¹). It is the IRO's job to ensure that care plans for children who are looked after by the local authority fully reflect their current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are congruent with the local authority's legal responsibilities for children and young people.

Each child has their own IRO from the time they start to be looked after. The IRO's role is to bring rigour and challenge to care planning, escalate contentious issues, drive plans for permanence and monitor the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent. Above all the IRO must make sure the child's current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

¹ Department for Education (2010). Independent reviewing officers' handbook. ([Link](#))



Summary

The looked after population since April 2016 has remained fairly stable averaging at 458 children at 31st March 2017. The IRO service conducted 1,221 reviews in 2016/17 and of these 1,172 (96%) reviews were completed within the prescribed time scale (an improvement from 91% in the previous year).

The service continues to make a steady improvement and demonstrable impact on the quality of services provided to our children in care. The IRO service now has a compliment of permanent, experienced staff which has meant there has been minimal change in the allocated worker for individual children over the last 12 months. The consistency of workers has been positive for children and the IROs can demonstrate that they know their children very well.

Resource implications

There are no specific resource implications relating to the IRO service that require consideration. The service budget sits within the responsibility of the Head of Quality, Standards and Performance.

Next steps

The 2016/17 annual report highlights a series of key activities for the service over the next year, that will continue to improve outcomes for children who are looked after.





INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
QUALITY, STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE**

Approved By:

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board : 19.09.17

Children's Services Senior Leadership Team : 28.09.17

Buckinghamshire County Council Corporate Management Team : 04.10.17

Document owner:

Julie Davies, Head of Quality, Standards and Performance

Buckinghamshire Children's Services

Executive Summary

Our looked after population since April 2016 has remained fairly stable averaging at 458 children at 31st March 2017. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service conducted 1,221 reviews in 2016/17 and of these 1,172 (96%) reviews were completed within the prescribed time scale (an improvement from 91% in the previous year).

At the end of 2016/17 38% of our children in care were placed no more than 20 miles from home which is considerably fewer than our statistical neighbours (62%). During the first half of 2017/18 improvements have been made in this area (52% placed no more than 20 miles away from home as the end of July 2017), however there is still some distance to travel when comparing to the national average of 74%. The Council's residential strategy and Change for Children Programme will increase the local sufficiency of placements alongside improving the quality of the accommodation offer for Buckinghamshire children.

Placements that are out of County have a significant impact on children in terms of contact with friends and family, maintaining their school placement and on travelling time for IROs to reviews, given that most reviews take place where children are placed.

The IRO's role is to bring rigour and challenge to care planning, escalate contentious issues, drive plans for permanence and monitor and challenge the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent. Above all the IRO must make sure the child's current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

The service continues to make a steady improvement and demonstrable impact on the quality of services provided to our children in care. The IROs remain aspirational for children through meaningful engagement with children and families to ensure they are involved in care planning with stretching targets. Appendix 4 details the positive progress in delivering the priority actions from the 2015/16 annual report

The IRO service now has a compliment of permanent, experienced staff which has meant there has been minimal change in the allocated worker for individual children over the last 12 months. The consistency of worker has been positive for children, as they know who will be turning up for their review meetings and the IROs can demonstrate that they know their children very well.

In terms of health outcomes for children in care, over the year:

- 95% had up to date immunisation compared to 88% in the previous year
- 95% had a dental check in the previous 12 months compared to 92% in the previous year
- 92.6% had a health assessment completed compared to 95% in the previous year.

The Council's joint commissioning team is working with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust to develop a health passport for looked after children. This will provide young people with a summary of their health history when they reach the age of 18.

The review process must be centred on the child and IROs are working continuously to make that a reality. Children are encouraged to participate in the review process as far as is practicable and reasonable to ask them to do. Last year 9 out of 10 children participated in their reviews and either spoke on their own behalf and/or had help to get their views across. In January 2017 a new App based tool called MoMo (Mind of My Own) was implemented to continue to strengthen the voice of the child in the review process.

One of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. The individual IRO is personally responsible for activating the dispute resolution process, even if this step may not be in accordance with the child's wishes and feelings. The council's protocol for raising concerns was reviewed during 2016/17 and a new protocol and on-line tool was launched in April 2017. This will ensure the service can demonstrate that rigorous and successful challenge is taking place when it is required.

There remains more ground to cover in terms of continued improvements which is achievable with a well-established and resourced service and a team of staff who are confident and experienced and know their children well.

Section 1: Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of the quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the impact of the IRO service in Buckinghamshire County Council as required by statutory guidance (the Children Act 1989, Section 25B (1) and in their handbook¹). It is their job to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are congruent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child.

Every parent wants the best for their child and as a corporate parent, Buckinghamshire County Council is working to ensure that all looked after children are healthy, safe and happy, do well at school, enjoy good relationships with their peers and can grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent lives.

Each child has their own IRO from the time they start to be looked after. The IROs role is to bring rigour and challenge to care planning, escalate contentious issues, drive plans for permanence and monitor the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent. Above all the IRO must make sure the child's current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

¹ Department for Education (2010). Independent reviewing officers' handbook. ([Link](#))

The Independent Reviewing Officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligations to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or whether we are failing.

Mr Justice Peter Jackson, NCB, 2014

IROs play a key role in achieving permanence for children by tracking care planning, often through court proceedings, by monitoring the implementation of plans and making changes to reflect new information or changing circumstances. Typically IROs conduct formal reviews at least once every six months until the child stops being looked after or becomes 18.

Reviews are held more frequently when children start being looked after, during adoption and guardianship proceedings, when a care plan changes or if the IRO identifies issues that need to be addressed urgently. By a child's second review their plan for permanence should be in place. The IRO must take a proactive role in ensuring that permanency planning is underway and there are no delays in decisions about the child's long term care plan.

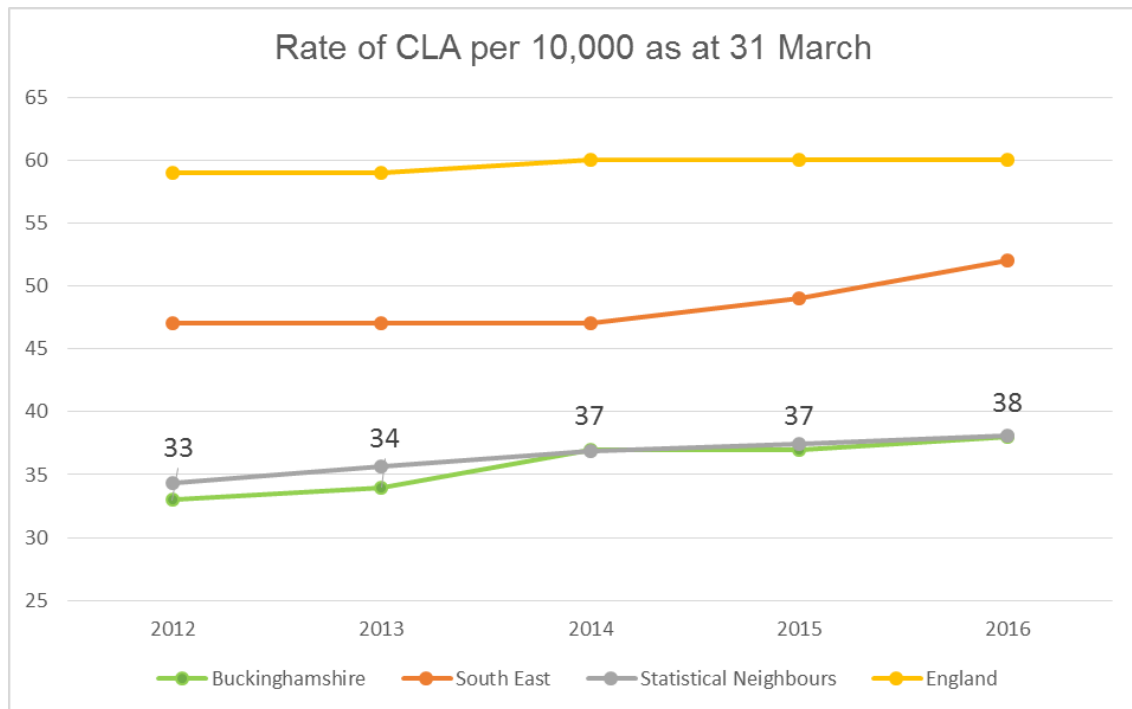
IROs must monitor each child between reviews and IROs examine each of their cases in depth at least 4 times a year. If the IRO believes a child's human rights have been breached, and all attempts to resolve the matter have been exhausted, they can ask the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to intervene.

Section 2: Profile of looked after children in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire's Independent Review Officers (IROs) oversee the quality and implementation of the care plans for children looked after by the council. There were 458 children looked after by Buckinghamshire County Council on 31st March 2017. The number of looked after children has increased consistently since 2008 and the current total is the highest recorded in the last 20 years².

² There is no evidence that the increases are a result either of increasing numbers of children looked after under a series of short term placement or unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Numbers of both these groups have been stable since 2011.

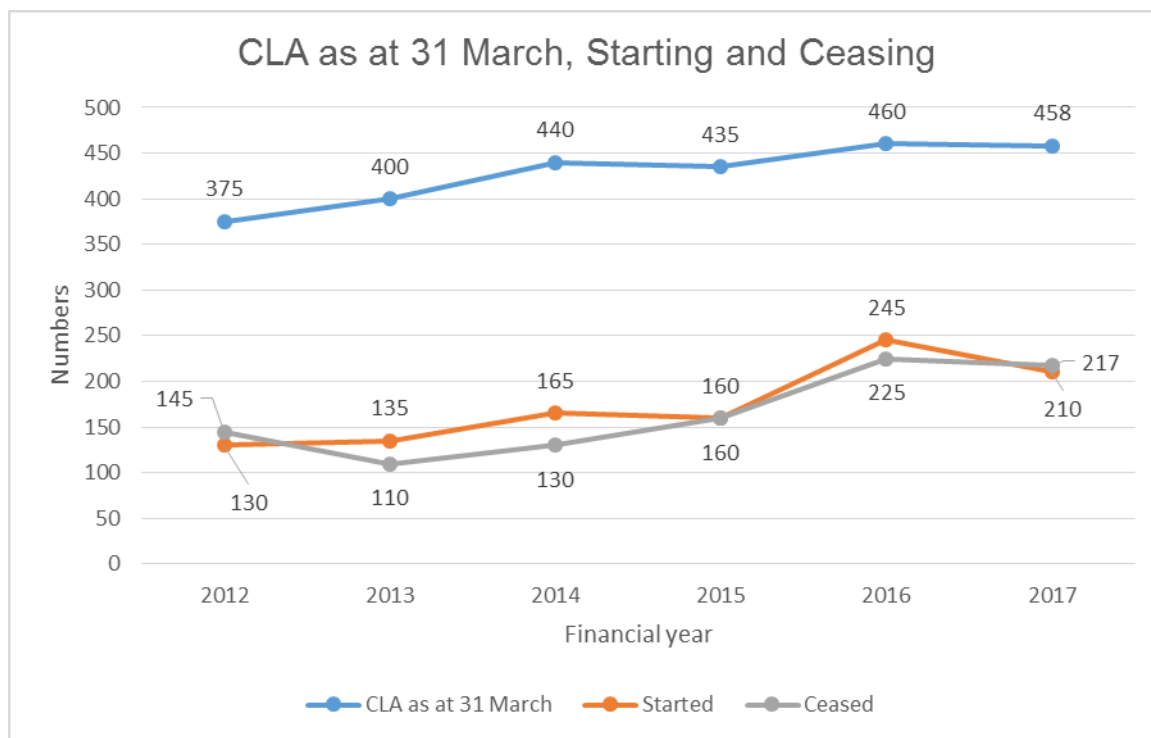
Figure 1 Rate of children looked after per 10,000 children (snapshot) compared to statistical neighbours and England



Source: Depart for education, Children Looked After 2015/16

Although the number of looked after children has increased by 22% from 2012 there has been little change in the rate of looked after children per 10,000 of the under 18 population (Figure 1). The number of children being looked after throughout the year is both driven by children staying and new children starting to be looked after by the local authority (Figure 2).

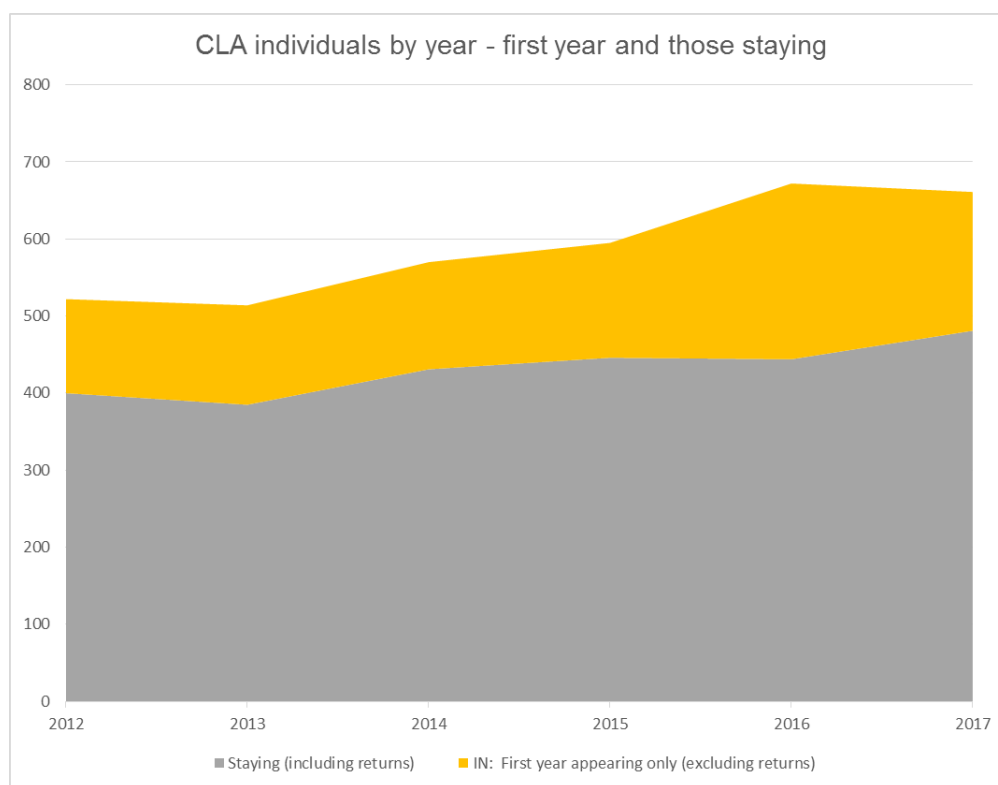
Figure 2 Number of children looked after as at 31 March 2017, starting and ceasing to be looked after in the year



Source: Depart for Education, Children Looked After 2015-16, including information from Children’s Information team from 2017.

There has been a change in the number of children starting to be looked after. In 2016/17, 210 children started to be looked after compared with 245 children starting a period of care in 2015/16. Figure 3 below suggests that although at points in time the number of children looked after remains relatively stable, there has been a gradual increase in time of the number of children entering care for the first time, compared to the number of children leaving care.

Figure 3 Number of individual children by year broken down by children appearing for the first time and children continuing to be looked after



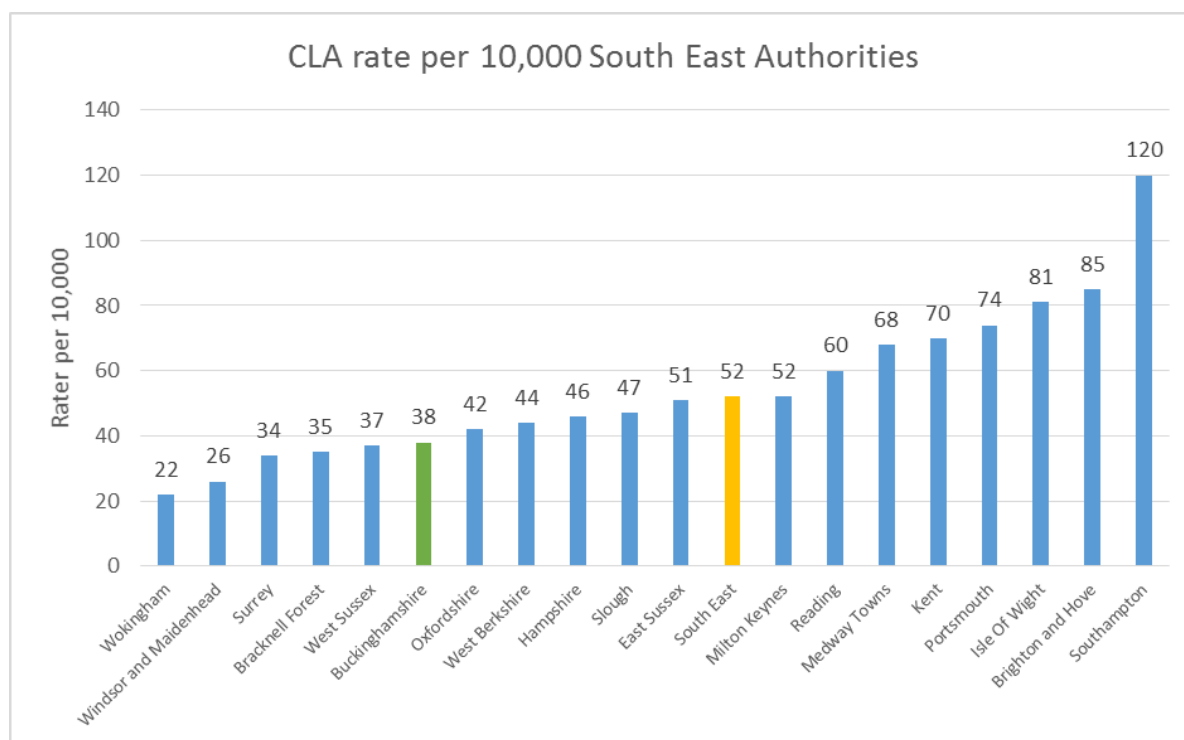
Source: LCS information on children looked after from 2012, to 2016/19

The growing number of looked after children has direct implications for the workloads of the local authority’s IROs. In fact the number of reviews increased by 33% compared with 2014-15. This is because there are more children to review but also because there has been a substantial increase in the numbers moving in and out of Buckinghamshire care placements, and an increase in court proceedings which require reviews more often than those in settled placements.

Other factors affecting the increasing number of children looked are because the council, in common with most other councils in the country, now looks after a larger proportion of those children, but also the increases in levels of poverty and its impact on people living in deprivation.

In 2017, 38 out of every 10,000 of those aged under 18 were looked after by the council. That is almost double the 21 per 10,000 in 1999. All but one of the 27 shire counties increased the share of their population they looked after between 1999 and 2015. Despite recent increases Buckinghamshire continues to have one of the lowest populations of children looked after, as a proportion of its population (Figure 4 below).

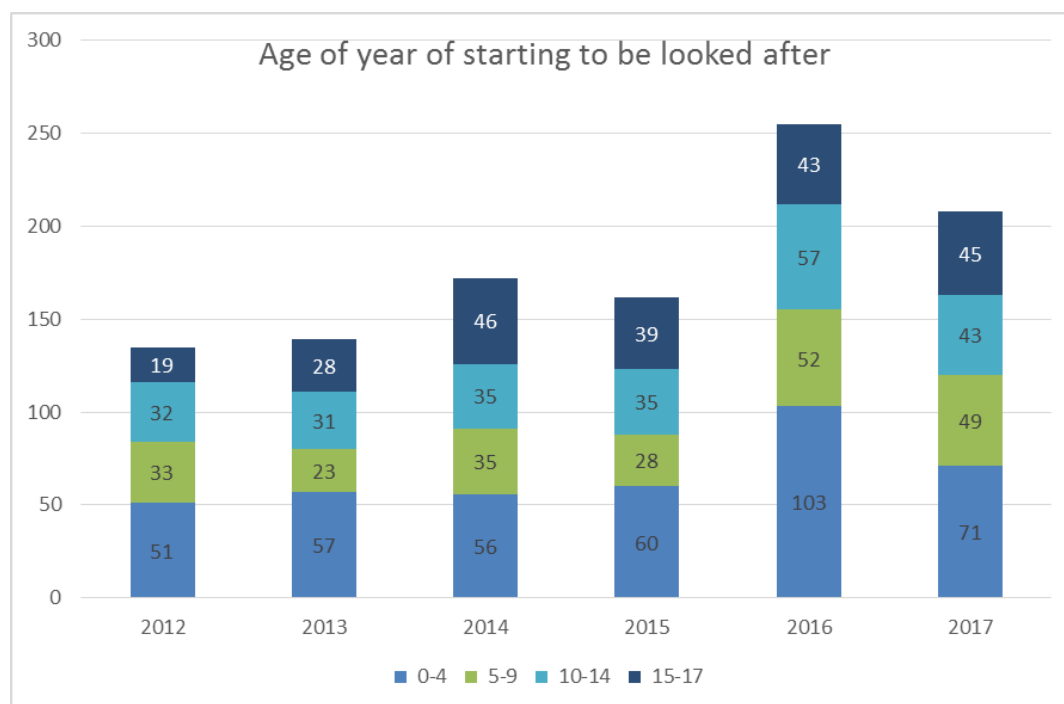
Figure 4 Children looked after per 10,000 population in South East 2017



Source: Department for Education. Children looked after in England 2015/16 return

Nationally, the age profile has continued to change over the last four years, with a steady increase in the number and proportion of older children in care. 62% of children looked after across England were aged 10 years and over in 2016 compared with 56% in 2012. There has been a reduction in the number and proportion of children aged 1-4 years (from 18% of the looked after population in 2012 to 13% in 2016), and a slight decrease in the number and proportion of children aged under 1 year (from 6% in 2012 to 5% in 2016).

Figure 5 Age of children when they start to be looked after by year in Buckinghamshire



The picture in Buckingham differs to that seen nationally as can be seen in Figure 5 above. There has been an increase in the number of children aged 0-4 years and 5 to 9 years old who started to be looked after. Out of 1,221 reviews held in 2016/17, 250 children were aged under-4 at the point that the meeting was held. Early indications for 2017 shown by the last column in the graph are that this trend is continuing.

As at the end of March 2017, 62% of children were placed more than 20 miles from home. This is a matter of particular concern, not least because the proportion is higher than in neighbouring counties. Too many looked after children have to change schools when they become looked after and there is already evidence that educational outcomes for children in care are proportionally lower than their peers (Appendix 1). In addition to making it harder to deliver the outcomes that looked after children deserve, time that could be spent on professional practice is wasted on longer travel time for visits to children, meetings and reviews.

The work of the IRO is tailored to each child who they are responsible for. Over the last decade the characteristics of the children who the IROs work with have changed in a number of important ways with implications for how the service meets their needs. Over the last 10 years, the children, the service works with are:

- Younger - a third of those looked after are now aged under 10; although children are entering care at a younger age (Figure 5)
- More likely to be placed in external foster homes

- More likely to be subject to a formal order
- More likely to be placed further from their home - 50% are placed out of County; 62% more than 20 miles from home.

Section 3: Professional profile of the IRO service

The IROs sit within the Quality Standards and Performance Service with its core functions consisting of reviewing plans for children in care and monitoring and challenging the local authority in respect of its corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities.

IROs are located in the Aylesbury and High Wycombe offices, on the same floor space as the Social Work teams but in a separate area. The location supports effective work with social work teams. The team has experienced stability and steady improvement in performance over the last year, with a team of 8 IROs (7.2 FTE) now in post. This has resulted in all children experiencing continuity of IRO.

All IROs are qualified Social Workers and the majority of the team work full-time with one IRO working part-time. In terms of diversity, the profile of the service is more or less the same level as our looked after population i.e. over a third of our children in care are white. This is less so in terms of gender as there is only one male IRO in the team. The team is supported by three full time business administrators.

The IROs have regular monthly team meetings. As part of those team meetings, outside speakers and agencies join the meeting to provide training and updates. Recent updates have covered the themes of neglect and the graded care profile for managers. Visitors to the team meetings have been the Virtual School, the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and the manager of the Family Group Conferencing Service.

The IROs also have an annual “learning away day”, where the team, present and discuss learning arising from recent research, audits and serious case reviews. Areas covered in last year’s session included domestic abuse, and child protection conferencing and transfers to becoming looked after.

IRO caseloads have been between 58 and 67 per full time worker. This compares favourably with the recommended case load of 50-70 set out in the IRO Handbook. Maintaining this caseload has resulted in IROs being much more involved in monitoring cases and using the escalation process to tackle drift; evidencing their involvement through footprint; meeting up with children before reviews; and conducting earlier reviews where there is a proposed change of care plan or placement disruption.

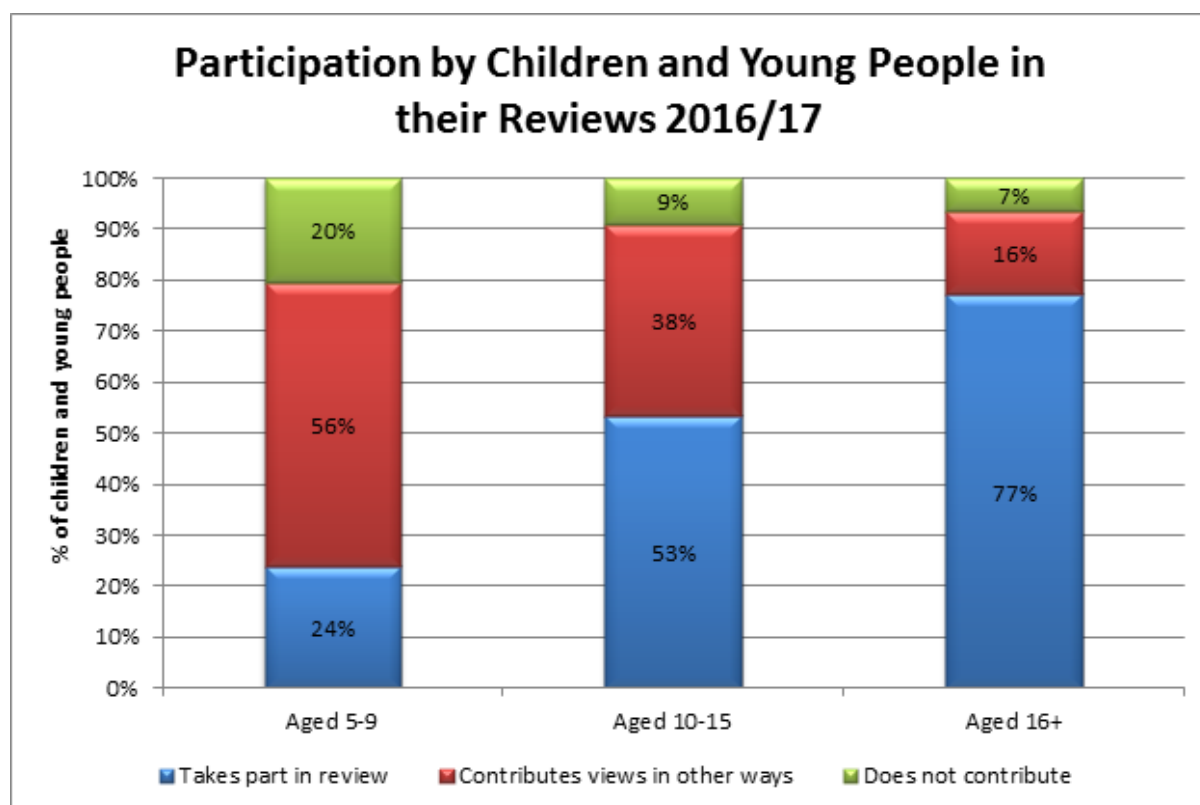
Eight observations of IROs chairing reviews over 2016/17 evidenced that the quality of the service is good and while the style of chairing varies, it is evident that participants are engaged in the process; and children, who attend, meet individually with the IRO before each review so their needs and wishes inform the review.

The IRO Manager has conducted audits of review minutes and given feedback to IROs in supervision. Where minutes and recommendations were found to be too long, IROs have been requested to reflect on and adjust their style accordingly. All reviews are therefore child-centred with specific recommendations that are aspirational and measurable.

Section 4: Voice of the child

One of the key tasks of an IRO is to discuss with children their wishes and feelings not just before their reviews, but also by visiting them between reviews, having telephone discussions and e mail exchanges. This is a critical part of the IRO’s role and they must work continuously to ensure that the review process is centred on the child and what is important to them.

Children are encouraged to participate in the review process as far as is practicable and reasonable to ask them to do. 95 % of children participated in their reviews for the year ending 31st March 2017.



This year participation rates for children aged 5-9 years who have not contributed (either attended or made their views known) has increased to 20%, compared to less than 10% in 2015/16 who had not contributed. In the higher age range, participation is much better and only a small percentage (9% of those aged 10-15) and (7% of those aged 16+). The use of Mind Of My Own (MOMO) for children in the 5-9 age range will be promoted to improve their contribution to reviews.

The MOMO app was introduced in January 2017 as a means by which children could make their views known to their IRO in-between reviews. The impact of this will be assessed as part of the 2017/18 annual report. Alongside this, MOMO Express (an updated and more interactive version) is available for younger children and children with disabilities. This is being promoted and supported through the Children with Disabilities Social Work teams.

Views and comments expressed by children about their review through MOMO include.

- Location and timing of the review
- Concerns about parent or professional attending
- Asking whether they can be excused from some of the meeting
- Asking who they will be sitting next to in the meeting

The IROs have improved their links with the We Do Care Council through attending their meetings and contributing to their work activity over the year. Following feedback the IRO service has agreed to work on two specific projects that form part of the We Do Care Council's annual work plan:

- The inclusion of children on recruitment panels for Social Workers and Managers.
- Encouraging children in care to be more actively involved in their reviews by chairing all or part of their reviews with the support of their IROs

The Council's' contract with The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) provides a number of services to looked after children, including:

- A free telephone service providing direct access to the NYAS legal team for information, advice and representation;
- Advocacy for individual children; and,
- A visiting service to residential and respite units in the county.

IROs have helped to ensure that children have access to advocacy through direct links with NYAS through a lead IRO. Weekly reports provided to the IRO Manager capture whether a referral to NYAS should be made following a review. Advocacy is essential for children who are looked after and these processes can make a vital contribution to safeguarding and promoting their welfare and rights.

NYAS provided advocacy support in 228 looked after children reviews between April 2016 and March 2017. Below is a comment from a child who used the NYAS advocacy service for support at their review:

'This has just been to the best LAC review. I got decisions on everything I asked for, without getting all frustrated and angry. If they didn't listen to me this time, I would have asked to move placements, and that isn't what I want 'cos I get on pretty well with Donna, but I've stuck to their rules for such a long time. I don't complain and stuff, but they need to know it's not fair and now it's time for things to change. I'm just so pleased that I got to say what I wanted in the review.'

Foster carers also have an important role to play. Buckinghamshire's IROs provide training sessions for foster carers on how to get the best outcomes from review meetings. The training provided by the IRO service over 2016/17 was well received, especially by new foster carers who attended. Some of them commented that they now have a "*much better understanding of the role of the IRO*" and also about their contribution to the child's review. The training also provided feedback from foster carers about the service's performance for example, the duration of LAC reviews (some of which went on for too long) and also a request to re-instate the consultation forms which used to be sent out to them prior to the review.

Section 5: Making things better for children

One of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. It is expected that IROs establish positive working relationships with the Social Workers of the children for whom they are responsible. The individual IRO is personally responsible for activating the dispute resolution process, even if this step may not be in accordance with the child's wishes and feelings, but may, in the IRO's view, be in accordance with their best interest. Their role in raising disputes goes beyond acting as a critical friend to their council colleagues, as Mr Justice Peter Jackson made clear:

*"The IRO should not be a friend of the local authority, critical or otherwise But the IRO should be a monitor or inspector who cannot be ignored. S/he must constantly hold in mind that every concession to working relationships with adult colleagues may make life easier for the adults but harder for the children ..."*³

Demonstrating rigorous and successful challenge is possibly the most important test facing IROs. Ofsted have previously highlighted the need for IROs to be in a position to robustly challenge all agencies involved to ensure that children's needs are met. During 2016, the protocol for IROs to raise concerns was reviewed and strengthened and the team has prioritised the recording and monitoring of these concerns on LCS, which has meant there is now (as of April 2017) a clear process for collating this information from the case management system.

³ NAIRO Conference 2013

The reasons for alerts are many and varied but a number of issues reoccur. Typically these relate to important tasks not being carried out when they should and care plans not being implemented with the necessary focus. For example:

- Delays in identifying placements
- Premature rehabilitation plans (retuning children home)
- Delays in family finding for permanency
- Negative impact of another child in placement
- Delays in re-allocation of Social Worker
- Plans not shared with child
- Delay in providing appropriate education resource
- IRO not informed or consulted about significant change to Care Plan.

Effective use of the issue resolution processes helps to limit issues of drift or delay and the unnecessary escalation of issues, and the changes in practice and outcomes for children have been:

- Social Workers being reminded to share their reports with the child and review participants, thus enabling children to be more aware of the plans for them.
- Increased monitoring and communication with the Social Work teams so that IROs are consulted earlier about potential changes for children which has resulted in IROs being able to bring reviews forward or to conduct earlier reviews for children.

The IRO service has embedded the Cafcass and Independent Reviewing Officer Good Practice Protocol for Public Law Work. This will help to ensure cases in proceedings are subject to robust analysis and challenge about the matters of critical importance to the child's safety, wellbeing and permanency needs.

A joint workshop between IROs and Guardians is scheduled to take place in September 2017 and thereafter there will be quarterly workshops to strengthen relationships and to improve practice. It is anticipated that future workshops will include Social Workers as these three practitioners form a key part of the team around the child.

Section 6: Key activities for 2017-18

| KEY ACTIVITIES | | LEAD AND BY WHEN |
|---|--|--|
| Continuous improvement of the IRO Service | Immediate escalation to the Team Manager where the permanence plan for an individual child is not clear by the second looked after review. | Independent Reviewing Officers will provide updates at each supervision to the IRO manager |
| | Review use of the IRO dispute resolution process to evidence use of timely | IRO Manager to analyse use of dispute resolution process and provide report to Head |

| KEY ACTIVITIES | | LEAD AND BY WHEN |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | escalations and impact on improving outcomes for children | of Service by December 2017 |
| | Decisions from LAC reviews will be regularly quality assured to ensure they are embedded in social work practice and reflected in current care plans | IROs to undertake bi-monthly audits of children's journeys, commencing October 2017. |
| Voice of the child | Increase the number of children attending their reviews and reduce the number of 5-9 year olds not participating in their review | IRO Manager to provide quarterly performance reports to Head of Service in September, December and January |
| | Support children to chair or lead their reviews | IROs to identify in September children who could chair or lead their reviews |
| | Provide at least two training sessions for foster carers about how to make effective use of reviews | IRO Manager with the Fostering Team manager to deliver two sessions by March 2018 |
| | Explore the use Skype communication for conducting some long distance reviews to reduce their travelling and offer another means of participation for children | IRO Manager to produce a scoping paper on effectiveness of and availability of other means of conducting reviews with an analysis of the impact on children's participation (by January 2018) |
| | Continue to regularly engage with the We Do Care Council by attending their meetings and participating in events | IRO Manager identify and agree with the We Do Care Council dates to attend events during 2017/18 |
| | Revise the format of the review agenda and minutes to make it more appropriate for use by children, adopting a similar approach to the "Strengthening Families" model for reviews | IRO Manager to produce process change report for consideration at Operational Management Group by January 2018 |
| Making things better for children: | Continue to report at intervals on the themes emerging from concerns | IRO Manager to provide quarterly reports to the Head of Service |

| KEY ACTIVITIES | | LEAD AND BY WHEN |
|----------------|---|--|
| | raised by IROs and any actions needed to reduce these concerns. | |
| | Play an active role and attend the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel to support children's voices to be heard at these meetings | IRO Manager to attend each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel during 2017/18 |

Conclusion

The IRO service has made good progress over the last 12 months. The necessary improvement identified by Ofsted during their monitoring visits, have been addressed and there are solid foundations in place and a well-established and resourced team of staff in post to ensure positive outcomes can continue to be achieved for children who are looked after by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Appendix 1 - Education of looked after children

Buckinghamshire's Virtual School is part of Buckinghamshire County Council. All children in our care are part of the Virtual School. The majority attend their local educational setting, although the Virtual School does have a classroom for additional tuition and support in Amersham.

The team of 20 experienced educational staff work directly with schools, social workers, foster carers and the child in order to improve their educational achievements. They also offer support to children who have been adopted and live in Buckinghamshire.

Overall educational achievement in Buckinghamshire is very high and so the gap between looked after children and their peers is large. However the Virtual School can demonstrate the impact that it has on every looked after child and can evidence the good progress made by our children once they come into our care. The academic achievement in 2016/17 academic year is detailed below:

| Measure | Number of Pupils in year 11 | Percentage | Number of Pupils in year 11 April 16/ March 17 | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|--|------------|
| Total number of pupils | 44 | | 33 | |
| Pupils with EHCP | 21/44 | 47.7% | 19/33 | 57.6% |
| UASC/EAL pupils | 7/44 | 15.9% | 2/33 | 6.1% |
| CWD | 5/44 | 11.4% | 5/33 | 15.2% |
| Number of pupils who sat GCSE | 25/44 | 56.8% | 20/33 | 60.6% |
| Number who sat GCSE gaining 1 GCSE grade | 24/25 | 96.0% | 19/20 | 95.0% |
| Number who sat GCSE gaining 1 GCSE grade at C grade equivalent | 13/25 | 52.0% | 10/20 | 50.0% |
| Number who sat GCSE gaining 5 A*-C in EM | 3/25 | 12.0% | 2/20 | 10.0% |
| Number of whole cohort gaining 5A*-C inc EM | 3/44 | 6.8% | 2/33 | 6.1% |
| Number gaining Maths at 4 and above (those who sat) | 7/25 | 28.0% | 4/20 | 20.0% |
| Number gaining Eng at 4 and above (those who sat) | 1/5 | 20.0% | 4/20 | 20.0% |

The virtual school:

- Works closely with the carer/home to slowly improve their attendance. Sometimes the VS classroom is used as an interim measure.
- Meets regularly with Headteachers and DT's to review needs and provide training.
- Provides termly foster carer training in relation to education
- Undertake up to date attachment training which is cascaded to schools.
- Has an excellent Book distribution scheme. They are sent out according to interest and ability.
- Holds annual multiagency conference on LAC related issues. Evaluation supports its value.
- Raises aspiration by links with local grammar schools who provide enrichment activities (Particularly AGS and Beaconsfield High)
- Provides exam entry and invigilation at VS classroom enabling pupils who are not in school to gain qualifications.
- Has an excellent commissioning of Year 6 transfer support with annual evaluation. (PPG+)

Areas for development:

- KS4 Attainment 8 and Progress 8 data reflects the complex issues bringing the older pupils into care (link to Rees Centre Research linking age at entering care and placement moves to attainment). It also reflects the very high proportion of pupils with an EHCP which means this cannot be directly related to the Bucks mainstream schools data set. Data available and narrative for pupils.
- VS records show we are not always informed about all children coming into care in a timely way so sometimes KPIs missed.
- Shortage of Good alternative provision and post 16 courses in Bucks.
- Exclusion is always something the VS asks its schools to avoid and provides respite at the VS classroom to avoid it whenever possible. However the nature of some of our pupils means that exclusions happen and the VS works very closely with the schools and carers in order to reintegrate the pupil as soon as possible. We provide resources and funding for nurture groups, alternative courses and play therapy where necessary.
- It is hard to provide as good a service to those living a long way away but the VS strives to provide the same service.
- Still hard to find provision when pupils are moved out of county suddenly or with EHCP leading to pupils out of school for too long.

Appendix 2 - Health of looked after children

Good physical, mental and emotional health is an essential pre-requisite to successful learning, happiness and success in life. Looked after children and care leavers are more likely to experience poor physical and mental health. Many looked after children come into care with chronic physical and mental health problems that are a result of their early experiences and neglect.

For children who had been looked after for at least a year on 31st March 2016:

- 88% had up to date immunisations
- 92% had a dental check in the previous 12 months
- 95% had a health assessment completed

Children in Care remain a priority within Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) and the Children in Care team is supported by senior management to try and ensure that not only are the IHAs undertaken in a timely way but also to meet identified health needs and improve the health outcomes and life chances of this disadvantaged, vulnerable group of children.

The Children in Care health team has moved into the Safeguarding team and is managed by Nuala Waide, Associate Director for Adult & Children's Safeguarding.

Currently the Designated Nurse undertakes a combined role which encompasses the Designated role and also the Named Nurse role. There are discussions about the Designated Role with a view that it would be most appropriate for it to be situated in the CCG. The Provider lead would be Named Nurse; as per *Looked After children: knowledge, skills and competences of health care staff. Intercollegiate Role Framework, March 2015*

Following the last Ofsted Inspection in order to improve timescales and try and ensure that IHA is undertaken in line with the Statutory Requirement the following measures have been taken –

- A combined dataset has been agreed and developed between health and social care;
- Health team receive electronic notifications from the Social Care electronic system (LCS)
- Re-design/simplification of the health assessment paperwork to be provided by Social Care for Initial Health Assessments
- The 5 key dates which impact upon timescales have been identified with clear and agreed escalation processes in place where delay has been
- A dedicated secure in-box has been created in Social Care so that paperwork can be scanned and received/returned between health and social care securely
- A LAC Initial Health Assessment Clinic has been set-up with all children living in Bucks being offered appointments at the clinic
- A small pool of GPs have been identified and trained to see children placed outside of area for Initial Health Assessment. The agreed criteria is that these children will be of secondary school age and not previously/already known to the Community Paediatricians.
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) is an integrated acute and community trust; arrangements have been made for the Consultants within the neo-natal maternity

unit to undertake IHA on babies who remain in hospital following birth; typically this may be babies who are born withdrawing from substances, or who are premature.

- There is a separately commissioned pathway for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). UASC who arrive in Buckinghamshire under the National Dispersal Scheme should have been seen for IHA before they arrive, however this has not always been the case.
- Refusers pathway –
 - If teenagers continue to refuse to be seen for IHA they are offered a Care Entry Health Assessment (CEHA) with the Designated Nurse, this follows discussion, advice and agreement with the child's Social Worker. Although this isn't an Initial Health Assessment it ensures that the young person is seen and has a comprehensive health assessment which focuses on lifestyle and risky behaviours.
 - The CEHA has been drawn up into Guidelines which have been signed off by the Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Social Care and the Corporate Parenting Panel.
 - All completed CEHAs are signed off by the Designated Doctor.

There are a great many complicated steps in trying to ensure that the statutory target for Initial Health Assessments is achieved and therefore much opportunity for failure despite best efforts. One of the principal challenges is when children are placed outside of the area not least because many other areas have capacity issues of their own and in many instances their books are closed to children placed in area from other local authority.

Appendix 3 The Independent Reviewing Officer team

IROs in Buckinghamshire Council are based in the Quality Assurance, Safeguarding, and Performance Unit (QSP) includes Child Protection Conference Team, Independent Fostering Advisor, Quality Assurance Manager, Family Group Conference Team, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Childcare Complaints Team, and Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO).

The team currently comprises of 7.2 IRO posts at 31st March 2017:

- Ian Luke-Macauley - Service Manager (Full time)
- Cecilia Bool - IRO (Full time)
- Mary Kingston - IRO (Full time)
- Diane Blackwood - IRO (Full time)
- Pamela Sugrue - IRO (Full time)
- Helen Belmore - IRO (Full time)
- Lauren Watts - IRO (Full time)
- Daniel Otto - IRO (Full time)
- Sandra Clarke - IRO (Part time – 14 hours term time only)

Appendix 4 - Progress in delivering key activities in 2016/17

| Action | Progress | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Reduce the number of late reviews | Achieved : 96% of reviews completed in time | Children's plans progress in a timely way |
| 2. Increase capacity in the IRO team | Achieved: Additional post created in the team and all staff are permanent | Experienced and stable team in post building positive and effective relationships with children |
| 3. Recruit Fostering Independent Review Officer | On hold pending review of the fostering service | Regulation 44 visits are undertaken by managers from across the Quality, Standards and Performance service |
| 4. Re-instate the pre-review report | Achieved: Report reinstated on LCS | Knowledge and information collated in one place resulting in more effective discussions at review meetings |
| 5. IRO service manager to meet with Cafcass | Achieved: Meeting took place | The Cafcass and Independent Reviewing Officer Good Practice Protocol for Public Law Work is now embedded ensuring drift and delay avoided |
| 6. Extend MOMO and launch worker account | Partly Achieved: Use of MOMO has been promoted across all social work teams. MOMO Express implemented for younger children and those with special educational needs | Positive response from children in being able to more readily raise issues with their IRO and Social Worker |
| 7. Support Corporate Parenting Panel | Partly Achieved: Regular reports to Panel on outcomes from the Regulation 44 visits undertaken were presented to Panel | Corporate Parenting Panel aware of the experiences of children in the care of the local authority that are placed in 1A |
| 8. Informal Away Day with We Do Care Council | Achieved: IRO Manager attended away day with We Do Care Council | Priority actions identified by the We Do Care Council included in the IRO service priorities for 2017/18 |
| 9. Revise format of the review agenda | Not Achieved | Carried forward into 2017/18 |
| 10. Add information to the Council's website on consultation and feedback forms | Achieved: The We Do Care Council website has information and links about how children can provide feedback. Information added to Council website on how to have a say | The 2016/17 annual complaints report highlights that 11 children and 6 care leavers submitted complaints over the year |
| 11. Provide at least two training sessions for foster carers | Achieved: Training provided on how to how to get the best outcomes from review meetings | Positive feedback from those who attended, particularly new foster carers |

Children's Social Care & Learning Select Committee

| Date | Topic | Description and Purpose | Lead Service Officer | Attendees |
|-------------|--|--|--|-----------|
| 17 Oct 2017 | Early Help | To seek Members views on the proposals for a new approach to helping children and families earlier, to ensure small problems don't get bigger and too difficult to manage. | Carol Douch, Service Director (Children & Family Service) | |
| 17 Oct 2017 | Independent Reviewing Officer Service | For Members to consider the performance of the IRO service and current resourcing. | Julie Davies, Head of Children's Quality Standards & Performance | |
| 17 Oct 2017 | Performance Report - Q1 2017-18 | For the Committee to review and question Cabinet Members on areas of underperformance. | Gladys Rhodes White, Executive Director Children's Services | |
| 17 Oct 2017 | The Educational Psychology Service Action Plan | To update Members on progress with implementing the Educational Psychology Service Action Plan | Craig Tribe | |
| 5 Dec 2017 | National Funding Formula for Schools | For Members to consider changes to the National Funding Formula and the impact on Buckinghamshire schools. | Sarah Callaghan, Service Director Education | |
| 5 Dec 2017 | NHS England Sustainability and Transformation Plan | Understanding the impacts of integrating Health and Social Care on Children's Services including the NHS England Sustainability and Transformation Plan | David Johnston, Managing Director, Children's Social Care, Children and Young People | |

| Date | Topic | Description and purpose | Lead Service Officer | Attendees |
|-------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| 5 Dec 2017 | Preventing Bullying in Schools | For the Committee to look at work being undertaken to prevent bullying in schools in Buckinghamshire. | Yvette Thomas, Children's Policy and Equalities Manager | |
| 6 Feb 2018 | Performance Report - Q2 2017-18 | For the Committee to review and question Cabinet Members on areas of underperformance. | Gladys Rhodes White, Executive Director Children's Services | |
| 6 Feb 2018 | Voice of the Child and Young Person Inquiry - Recommendations | To review and make an assessment of progress against the agreed recommendations of the inquiry 12 months on | Gladys Rhodes White, Executive Director Children's Services | |