

*Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young*

# Action Plan to address the ILACS Recommendations

April 2021 – 2022

Progress updates from August 2021



## Introduction

This is our action plan for 2021/22 to address the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in November 2019. It outlines our ambition for the 12 month period between April 2021 and April 2022, and what we will do to continue to improve the support we offer to children, young people, families and carers. It builds on the progress from our previous plans that we implemented following the inspection. The full inspection report which outlines the recommendations and findings of the inspection is available on the [Ofsted website](#).

The inspection found that significant progress had been made since our previous inspections in 2018 and 2015. Clear strengths were identified including our early help offer, a strengthened front door, our edge of care support, management of risk to children exposed to exploitation, the creativity of frontline practitioners in direct work with children and young people, and crucially **the voice of the child being at the centre of everything we do**.

However, overall, the quality of our practice was too variable, and required further improvement to be consistently good. Some vulnerable groups, such as children experiencing chronic long-term neglect, children who were privately fostered, and homeless 16 and 17 years olds, were not always receiving the right support.

We are committed to addressing the recommendations from the inspection to improve the support we offer to children, young people, families and carers. Our continued focus is on achieving excellent outcomes for children and young people through **establishing consistently good practice**.

## Progress so far

It's been over 18 months since the inspection, and in that time we have worked hard to continue to develop our services. We have brought our fostering recruitment service in house, launched our own fostering campaign, and developed our first Mockingbird constellation and well as leading on the coproduction of a Neglect strategy with statutory and third sector agencies. We've also been busy responding to the global Coronavirus pandemic, ensuring that we have continued to prioritise and meet children and young people's changing needs. We have brought in external advice and challenge from the LGA to ensure we could achieve improvements at pace, despite the pressures of the pandemic.

As leaders, we have developed a clear vision for children, young people, and care experienced adults in Cheshire East, **Together for Children and Young People**. We want to ensure that across the Council and the partnership, everyone is clear on our shared ambition for children and young people, and we work together to achieve the best outcomes.

To support children and young people, the Council has boosted investment in Children's Social Care Services by an additional £1.5m for 2021/22, and has protected our early help offer despite a challenging financial climate. To enhance our offer to families we have increased caseworkers, strengthened front door delivery, mainstreamed our edge of care support and improved risk tracking and planning for children exposed to exploitation.

The progress we have achieved against each of the recommendations is outlined in detail within our self-evaluation.

# Action Plan

Date of progress updates: August 2021

<b>Recommendation</b>	Improve the quality, consistency and analysis of assessments, and the child focus of plans.			
<b>What inspectors found</b>	<p>Inspectors found good quality practice, however overall, the quality of practice was not consistent, which meant some children and young people's needs were not fully identified or effectively met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some assessments did not contain enough analysis.</li> <li>• Assessments were not consistently updated when children and young people's needs changed.</li> <li>• Some plans were not SMART enough – they were not always clear about the outcome or timescales, and some were too focused on adult needs.</li> </ul> <p>Recording on children's files did not always capture the extent of the work that was taking place, including the rationale for decisions so children could understand why decisions were made for them. Sometimes there was not enough analysis of children and young people's experiences and the impact on them (for example in recording home visits).</p>			
<b>Baseline from 2020/21</b>		<b>Target for September 2021</b>		<b>Target for March 2022</b>
45% audited cases were good or better quality in November 2020.		80% audited cases will be good or outstanding.		90% audited cases will be good or outstanding.
<b>Position in August 2021 in relation to targets</b>				<b>Progress relative to targets</b>
Quality assurance activity from July 2021 found that 50% audited cases were good and 50% required improvement. The next audit is due in September 2021.				↓ Below target
<b>Ref</b>	<b>What we will do to achieve consistently good practice</b>	<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Complete by</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
1a	Continue to deliver our 'doing the basics well' training programme for practitioners to support consistently good practice across all services.	Sarah Flint, Principal Social Worker	March 2022	Additional masterclasses and practitioner clinics are being facilitated by our commissioned social work service and consultant social work practitioner focusing on CIN planning and direct work with children and young people.

1b	Commission additional capacity to ensure that assessments are routinely updated, children's needs responded to in a timely way, and social workers have capacity to deliver consistently good practice with a focus on analysis.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	1 October 2021	The commissioned service began operation on the 12 July 2021 – 1 October 2021. An impact report will be produced now the project has been completed. The additional capacity has resulted in the completion of 160 Child and Family assessments, supported 90 families with a focus on SMART CIN planning, and 90 families around family networking.
1c	Refresh and implement the Neglect Operational Strategy as our partnership approach to addressing neglect. Evaluate the impact of the Strategy via the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Neglect Board on a quarterly basis.	Louise Hurst, Head of Service Child in Need and Child Protection	March 2022	The Neglect Strategy has been refreshed in consultation with all partners and children and young people. It was launched in July 2021. Outcome measures have been agreed across the partnership. The Neglect Board will review progress and impact on performance on a quarterly basis.
1d	Deliver high support and high challenge to teams through our lead practitioners, extending this from three to four lead practitioners from June 2021.	Sarah Flint, Principal Social Worker	March 2022	Four lead practitioners are in place and are delivering masterclasses, targeted support to newly qualified social workers, and direct work with children and families. Monthly impact reports on this support are produced which are reported to the Excellence in Social Work Practice Leadership Meeting.
1e	Launch the refreshed training offer for social workers so it is clear what training is available and required for each specialism.	Jo Rigg, Training Officer	June 2021	The <a href="#">training offer</a> was launched in July 2021 and was sent to the homes of all frontline practitioners and managers
1f	Independent consultant to complete a review of behaviour and practice when identifying homes for cared for children and young people. The review to identify how we can strengthen our work to ensure we	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	March 2022	The review was completed in July 2021. An action plan has been produced in response outlining changes to service delivery to improve our

	are achieving our vision for children and young people.			performance in this area, and shared with the Directorate Management Team (DMT).
1g	Review the forms on the child's record, starting with plans, to ensure they support best quality practice.	Sarah Flint, Principal Social Worker	September 2021	The form for children's plans has been rewritten in consultation with systems analysis and frontline practitioners. This plan has been piloted in frontline teams and final changes will be agreed in September with a go live date of November 2021.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Ensure consistent management oversight and supervision in the organisation to ensure that consistent, good-quality social work practice is in place.		
<b>What inspectors found</b>	<p>Management oversight and supervision did not provide sufficient challenge or reflection to enable practitioners to improve their practice.</p> <p><b>Management oversight:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management oversight and challenge was not fully embedded in all areas - management oversight from both Team Managers and IROs did not always drive progressing plans within children’s timescales.</li> <li>• Performance information was not always scrutinised sufficiently to provide critical challenge of all services.</li> <li>• Current checks and balances did not identify the areas of weaker practice found in the inspection.</li> </ul> <p><b>Audits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team manager audits were inconsistent in quality, and some audits were over-optimistic in their judgements. Some audits were more compliance focused so were less effective in supporting reflection and improved practice. Some parts of the audit forms were not completed.</li> <li>• Inspectors felt there was not enough moderation of audits from senior managers (14% audited cases were moderated) given the over-optimism of judgements in team manager audits.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supervision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most social workers received regular supervision, however supervision was not always sufficiently analytical or reflective.</li> </ul>		
<b>Baseline from 2020/21</b>	<b>Target for September 2021</b>	<b>Target for March 2022</b>	
<p>In Q4 2021/22, 74% assessments were completed within 45 days.</p> <p>In April 2021, 65% children had an updated C&amp;F assessment within the last 12 months.</p> <p>In Q4 2021/22, the percentage of plans updated within timescales was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72% CIN</li> </ul>	<p>80% assessments will be completed within 45 days.</p> <p>80% children will have an updated C&amp;F assessment within the last 12 months.</p> <p>Over 80% of all plans will be updated within timescales.</p>	<p>90% assessments will be completed within 45 days.</p> <p>90% children will have an updated C&amp;F assessment within the last 12 months.</p> <p>Over 90% of all plans will be updated within timescales.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>87% CP</li> <li>95% Cared for</li> </ul>	<p>80% audited cases will have good management oversight.</p> <p>80% judgements from internal auditors will be agreed as accurate by the external auditor.</p>	<p>90% audited cases will have good management oversight.</p> <p>90% judgements from internal auditors will be agreed as accurate by the external auditor.</p>		
<b>Position in August 2021 in relation to targets</b>		<b>Progress relative to targets</b>		
From April – August 2021, 70.2% assessments were completed within 45 days.		↔ On track to achieve target for September		
91% children have an updated C&F assessment within the last 12 months.		↑ Achieved above target for March 2022		
<p>Percentage of plans updated within timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cared for plans - Crewe CINCP 85%, Macclesfield CINCP 74%, Cared for 97%, CWD 100%</li> <li>CP plans – Crewe CINCP 82%, Macclesfield CINCP 67%, CWD 100%</li> <li>CIN plans - Crewe CINCP 62%, Macclesfield CINCP 50%, CWD 68%</li> </ul>		<p>↑ Some teams are achieving above target</p> <p>↓ and some are below target</p>		
Audit activity between July and September 2021 is focusing on management oversight and will be reportable following audit headlines that are due in September.		■ Performance not yet available		
86% judgements from our internal audit activity was independently validated as accurate by our external auditor.		↑ Achieved above target for September		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>What we will do to achieve consistently good practice</b>	<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Complete by</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
2a	Team Managers Leadership Programme to be refreshed for 2021 in line with current progress targets. To be delivered throughout the year to ensure all managers are leaders for best practice. Sessions will include good quality supervision, effective leadership, management of performance information, and expectations of good	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children’s Social Care	March 2022 with quarterly review through Excellence in Social Work Practice senior leadership meetings	Reflections on the Team Manager Leadership programme, following consultation with team managers, evidenced that a broader leadership integration programme was required. This is currently being coproduced with leaders and managers in Children’s Social Care.

	practice to support consistency in management oversight and audit judgements.			
2b	Continue to commission independent audits to support developments to practice and provide moderation of team manager audits. Independent audits are carried with team managers to support learning on carrying out audits and making judgements on quality of practice.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	March 2022	Independent audits are continuing on a regular basis to provide external validation. In the latest independent audit in July 2021, the auditor agreed with the judgements on the majority of audits moderated which demonstrates that this support is increasing understanding and evaluation of the quality of practice across team managers.
2c	Develop a new process around senior manager moderation.	Phil Alcock, Audit Officer	July 2021	A new process has been developed and senior managers now audit three whole case files each month starting in August 2021.
2d	Annual supervision audit to be undertaken to ensure there is continued focus on impact on outcomes for children which drives improvement to practice, and there is a golden thread between senior leaders and frontline teams.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	June 2021	The supervision audit was completed in August 2021. Analysis of the findings are currently being prepared to be presented to the senior leadership team and to agree next steps.
2e	Performance challenge and scrutiny sessions to be carried out at Directorate Management level and with the senior leadership team for Children's Social Care to ensure scrutiny of performance drives improved outcomes for children.	Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services	March 2022	Performance scrutiny has taken place to review Q4 20/21 and Q1 21/22 data demonstrating transparency and accountability of frontline practice to the DCS.
2f	Director of Children's Social Care to complete the Practice Leadership Development Programme.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	May 2021	The Director of CSC has completed the course. Ongoing mentoring is in place from a DCS in a






				neighboring authority, and access to monthly practice leadership sessions.
2g	Two Heads of Service to apply for the Practice Leadership Development Programme as part of our continued development of our senior leadership team.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	April 2021	One Head of Service was successful in securing a place on the course which began in July 2021.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Improve management oversight of cases in pre-proceedings, to avoid drift and delay for children.		
<b>What inspectors found</b>	<p>Pre-proceedings work to try to achieve positive change for children and to avoid the need for them to come into care was not consistently timely.</p> <p>Some children's cases were managed within public law outline processes for too long without sufficient management oversight and review to decide whether alternative action needed to be taken to protect them.</p> <p>No children were found to be at immediate risk, however a small number of children experienced neglectful situations for too long. Some children waited too long to enter care and experience a sense of permanence. For a few children, this meant that they entered care in an unplanned way.</p>		
	<b>Baseline from 2020/21</b>	<b>Target for September 2021</b>	<b>Target for March 2022</b>
<p>Audits in February and March 2021 showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management oversight is improving. Team managers had improved their oversight of PLO casework in the majority of cases.</li> <li>• The 4 week review that was implemented in February 2020 is having a positive impact on identifying and preventing potential early drift in PLO.</li> <li>• There was evidence of consistent Service Manager oversight.</li> </ul>	<p>Audit of cases within pre-proceedings will show that for 80% cases, management oversight is effectively ensuring that children do not experience drift or delay.</p>		<p>Audit of cases within pre-proceedings will show that for 90% cases, management oversight is effectively ensuring that children do not experience drift or delay.</p>
	<b>Position in August 2021 in relation to targets</b>		<b>Progress relative to targets</b>
	<p>Management oversight of PLO has evidenced that service manager oversight is evidenced 100% of the time. The next step is to strengthen team manager oversight to further strengthen case progress in timescales that meet the needs of the child or young person.</p>		<p>↔ On track to achieve target for September</p>



Ref	What we will do to achieve consistently good practice	Lead person	Complete by	Progress to date
3a	Set up a Legal Board to hold everyone to account for timely outcomes for children.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	Legal Board to be established by April 2021	The Legal Board was established in April 2021 and has met on two occasions to consider performance in pre-proceedings and care proceedings.
3b	Lead/ engage in the Local Family Justice Board and Public Law Working Group Publication to ensure compliance and practice is in line with external changes and challenge the delays that are created by Court capacity.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	Throughout the year	Children's Social Care continue to engage with the Local Family Justice Board and have taken a proactive role in leading regional work around Public Law Working Group Publication which was announced in March 2021. This work will remain an ongoing focus.
3c	The service to be held to account for the effectiveness of social work practice in this area through regular reports and updates to the Achieving Outcomes for Children and Young People Senior Leadership Team Meeting.	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care	Progress is monitored on a quarterly basis.	Reports are being received by the Achieving Outcomes for Children and Young People Senior Leadership Team Meeting. The last PLO audit was received on 15 March 2021 and the next one will be received on 30 September 2021.
3d	Regular audits to be completed on pre-proceedings and proceedings to ensure progress in this area continues to be monitored.	Louise Hurst, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection	March 2022	Audits on the impact of Team Manager oversight within PLO are taking place bi-monthly. These audits are showing improvement in team manager oversight however there are still areas for development.  PLO cases within our Children with Disabilities Service have also been aligned to Macclesfield CINCP to support consistent oversight.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Improve the response to children in private fostering arrangements, children who are homeless aged 16 and 17 years old, and care leavers who need emergency accommodation.		
<b>What inspectors found</b>	<p><b>Private fostering</b> The response to children who were privately fostered was variable - the needs of some children were not thoroughly assessed, some did not always receive the right support, and the need for permanence was not always addressed promptly.</p> <p><b>Care leavers who need emergency accommodation</b> Some care leavers told inspectors that they did not always feel safe when they had been placed in emergency accommodation.</p> <p><b>Young people presenting as homeless</b> When young people presented as homeless, there was not a sufficiently robust response to ensure that their needs were fully identified, that they were fully supported, or that they were made aware of their right to become cared for. As a result, a small number of young people remained in situations of vulnerability.</p>		
	<b>Baseline from 2020/21</b>	<b>Target for September 2021</b>	<b>Target for March 2022</b>
<p>We have recommissioned our emergency accommodation offer in light of the feedback from young people and inspectors.</p> <p>An audit of privately fostered cases in January 2021 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 out of 11 children’s arrangement met the criteria for private fostering</li> <li>• 10 out of 11 arrangements were suitable for the child</li> <li>• 7 out of 11 children had an updated assessment within the last 12 months.</li> </ul>	<p>The bi-monthly ChECS audit will tell us that children and young people feel safe in their accommodation.</p> <p>80% privately fostered cases that are audited will be good or outstanding.</p> <p>80% audited cases for 16-17 year olds will show that support is good or outstanding quality.</p>	<p>The bi-monthly ChECS audit will tell us that children and young people feel safe in their accommodation.</p> <p>90% privately fostered cases that are audited will be good or outstanding.</p> <p>90% audited cases for 16-17 year olds will show that support is good or outstanding quality.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However the audit also showed that there were areas which still needed further improvement.</li> <li>• Going forward audits will be rated against the Ofsted criteria.</li> </ul> <p>An audit of homeless 16-17 year olds in February 2021 found that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 83% cases had a clear discussion on young people's choice regarding section 17 and section 20.</li> <li>• 100% had evidence of management oversight.</li> <li>• Areas for improvement included advocacy, which was not consistently discussed with young people, and there were opportunities for improvements to practice identified in 2 cases.</li> </ul>				
<b>Position in August 2021 in relation to targets</b>		<b>Progress relative to targets</b>		
A survey from Crewe YMCA with young people in March 2021 found that 100% young people felt safe in their accommodation.		 Achieved target		
60% audited privately fostered cases are achieving good or outstanding grades. This is predominantly due to the timeliness of the assessments not the quality of the assessment work or analysis. The audit findings are informing the training and development work being undertaken by the lead officers.		 On track to achieve target		
An audit of cases for 16-17 year olds is currently taking place.		 Performance not yet available.		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>What we will do to achieve consistently good practice</b>	<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Complete by</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
4a	Provide additional capacity within the Fostering Service to lead on private fostering to:	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	March 2021	The private fostering lead is in place; initial audit activity began in May 2021 and will continue on a monthly basis. The launch around private

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- raise awareness in a dedicated campaign from September 2021</li> <li>- audit cases so we can use the learning to focus on where we need to continue to improve practice</li> <li>- profile private fostering in the community.</li> </ul>			fostering is planned for September/ October 2021. Training has taken place with school admission as part of the identification of private fostering arrangements.
4b	Provide accommodation under the recommission of 16+ supported accommodation.	Dave Leadbetter, Head of Service Children's Commissioning	July 2021	The recommission of 16+ supported accommodation is complete and the contract has been awarded. Extensive remodelling has taken place with a complete rebuild of accommodation following consultation with young people. The build is due to be complete on the 24 September 2021.
4c	Implement the recommendations following external validation from Jill Boak, Ministry of Housing.	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers	June 2021	We have made significant progress against the action plan in response to the external validation from the Ministry of Housing. We met with Jill Boak from MHCLG and our Housing colleagues on 3 September 2021 to review progress against the action plan. The MHCLG were satisfied that we are continuing to work effectively as a partnership.
4d	Update the joint housing protocol with our ambition that no care leaver will access emergency accommodation.	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers	June 2021	The joint housing protocol has been updated and is currently being authorised jointly by Housing and Children's Social Care, with implementation planned for October 2021.
4e	Employ a housing officer in the front door to further strengthen the offer of prevention of 16/17 homelessness, and to support a robust response when this does happen.	Naomi Hollinshead, Service Manager for ChECS	June 2021	Recruitment to this post is currently underway and will support additional functions such as housing in the context of domestic abuse.

4f	Monthly multi-agency audits on 16-17 presenting as homeless to continue to take place in the front door to assess progress in this area.	Naomi Hollinshead, Service Manager for ChECS	March 2022	A reduction to bi-monthly audits was agreed in line with the positive progress made in this area. These will continue to ensure assurance is offered about meeting the needs of this potentially vulnerable group.
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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Improve the quality and consistency of support and engagement with foster carers.</b>	
<b>What inspectors found</b>	<p>Sufficiency of in-house foster carers was a known challenge - the number of approved fostering households had reduced and recent attempts to improve recruitment had not had the impact that we had hoped for.</p> <p>A significant group of foster carers had raised concerns about the support they received from the council. Inspectors found that foster carers were not always well supported, and that in some cases, working relationships were at risk of breaking down. Senior leaders were aware of the issues, and an independent review of the fostering service was planned prior to the inspection taking place.</p>	
<b>Baseline from 2020/21</b>	<b>Target for September 2021</b>	<b>Target for March 2022</b>
<p>As at February 2021, our fostering recruitment campaign had resulted in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 83 new foster care enquiries</li> <li>• 14 new foster carers in assessment.</li> </ul> <p>100% of our assessments of new foster carers were completed within the 8 months statutory timeframe. Our internal ambition is to complete these within 16 weeks.</p> <p>97% foster carer annual reviews were completed within timescales (held every 12 months).</p> <p>Feedback from foster carers demonstrates relationships have improved since the inspection.</p>	<p>We will gain an additional 30 in-house foster carers over the next 3 years (5 new carers by September).</p> <p>Over 50% assessments for new foster carers will be completed within 16 weeks.</p> <p>90% foster carer annual reviews will be completed within timescales (held every 12 months).</p> <p>Feedback from foster carers will continue to demonstrate improved relationships between foster carers and Cheshire East Council.</p>	<p>We will gain an additional 30 in-house foster carers over the next 3 years (5 additional new carers between September and March).</p> <p>Over 80% assessments for new foster carers will be completed within 16 weeks.</p> <p>99% foster carer annual reviews will be completed within timescales (held every 12 months).</p> <p>Feedback from foster carers will continue to demonstrate improved relationships between foster carers and Cheshire East Council.</p>
<b>Position in August 2021 in relation to targets</b>		<b>Progress relative to targets</b>
6 new foster carers have been recruited, creating an additional 10 homes for vulnerable children and young people.		 Achieved above target for September
We are still short of routinely achieving 50% of our new foster carer assessments within 16 weeks. Of the 6 newly approved foster carers only 2 were achieved within 16 weeks. There are some mitigating		 Below target



factors here including 2 groups of carers having building work completed to better enable them to foster and another who decided to go on holiday during the assessment period.	
97% of fostering reviews have been completed within timescales.	↑ Achieved above target for September
Feedback from foster carers continues to demonstrate improved relationships. Direct feedback is sought from the Fostering IRO at every Foster Carer Review. Foster carers are also assisting in the delivery and design of frontline services such as foster carers delivering training to frontline colleagues and sitting as core members of the Virtual School Governing Body. The Foster Carer Survey has just been completed and the results are being analysed.	↑ Achieved target for September

Ref	What we will do to achieve consistently good practice	Lead person	Complete by	Progress to date
5a	<p>Continue to improve fostering recruitment and retention by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-continuing to develop our marketing and recruitment campaign</li> <li>-becoming a foster friendly employer</li> <li>-launching a foster carer charter so it is clear what foster carers can expect from the LA, and our expectations of carers</li> <li>-developing specialist salaried foster carers.</li> </ul>	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	March 2022	<p>We are continuing to develop our marketing and recruitment campaign. Our current campaign has focused within mainline train stations across Cheshire East and our ongoing digital media presence.</p> <p>The fostering service have attended the Royal Cheshire Show and the Geronimo Festival which has generated 24 enquires. We will be attending further events across the County over the coming months.</p> <p>We have entered into a 12-month agreement with Silk FM to target recruitment across the northern parts of Cheshire East and neighbouring LA's.</p> <p>We have met with Engie following the Cheshire East Business Forum and are now developing a relationship with them. We are also looking to develop a relationship with the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.</p>

				<p>We have a whole page advertisement going out to every household in Cheshire East as part of the Covid-19 and Winter Wellbeing mailer.</p> <p>We have ambitions to become a foster friendly employer and to launch a revised foster carers charter. We are developing a framework for salaried foster care to provide specialist care to our children and young people.</p>
5b	Redesign the fostering service to establish specialised teams to enable effective support to foster carers and young people.	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	December 2022	<p>The consultation on the changes to the Fostering Service is underway. An additional delay has occurred to the formal restructure as consideration is now being given as to the functions of the current placement service being undertaken within the fostering service.</p> <p>The recruitment and marketing team has already been established and an acting team manager is in place through a service secondment.</p> <p>A service-wide online event has been completed and separate meetings are set up with the Fostering Support Workers as part of the consultation.</p>
5c	Develop and launch our second Mockingbird Hub.	Sarah Probert, Mockingbird Lead Practitioner	December 2021	<p>The timeline for the establishment of the second hub has been moved to October 2021. We have recruited the new hub home carers; however, they currently have children in placement (with plans for them to move on). This decision is supported by the Fostering Network and the DfE</p> <p>Satellite carers are currently being identified.</p> <p>Everything remains in place to support the successful launch of our second hub, which will cover Crewe, Sandbach and Middlewich.</p>

5d	Continue to update the fostering policies and procedures.	Cath Hogan, Service Manager Fostering	October 2021	We have updated over 50% of our policies and procedures, and remain on track to complete this work within this timeframe.
5e	Increase sufficiency in short break provision, including retendering our short break local offer for Disabled Children and their Families.	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	July 2021	<p>Our Short Break Local Offer for Disabled Children and their families has been recommissioned and began operation on 1 June 2021.</p> <p>We have commissioned an overnight short break provision called Pinewood, who are currently recruiting to their staff team.</p> <p>We have also recruited two new Short Break Foster Carers which increases our overall number to five.</p>
5f	Continue to engage with foster carers through regular newsletters, foster carer workshops, and involving foster carers in service development through task and finish groups.	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	March 2022	<p>We have recently completed our annual survey of foster carers and are currently analysing the responses.</p> <p>We have continued to publish regular newsletters.</p> <p>We have foster carer representation on all of our development groups and have just recruited a foster carer to the Virtual School Governing Body.</p>
5g	Develop and launch an information recording system which enables data input and data capture specifically through the fostering service (Fostering System Optimisation).	Keith Martin, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities and Fostering	March 2022	<p>7 workstreams have been established which are overseen by officers and service users. These are (with timeline dates):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portals (21/22)</li> <li>2. Fostering Recruitment Workflow (21/22)</li> <li>3. Family and Friends Workflow (21/22)</li> <li>4. Special Guardianship Workflow (22)</li> <li>5. Private Fostering Workflow (22)</li> </ol>

				6. Staying Put Workflow (22/23) 7. Supported Accommodation / Lodgings Workflow (22/23)
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